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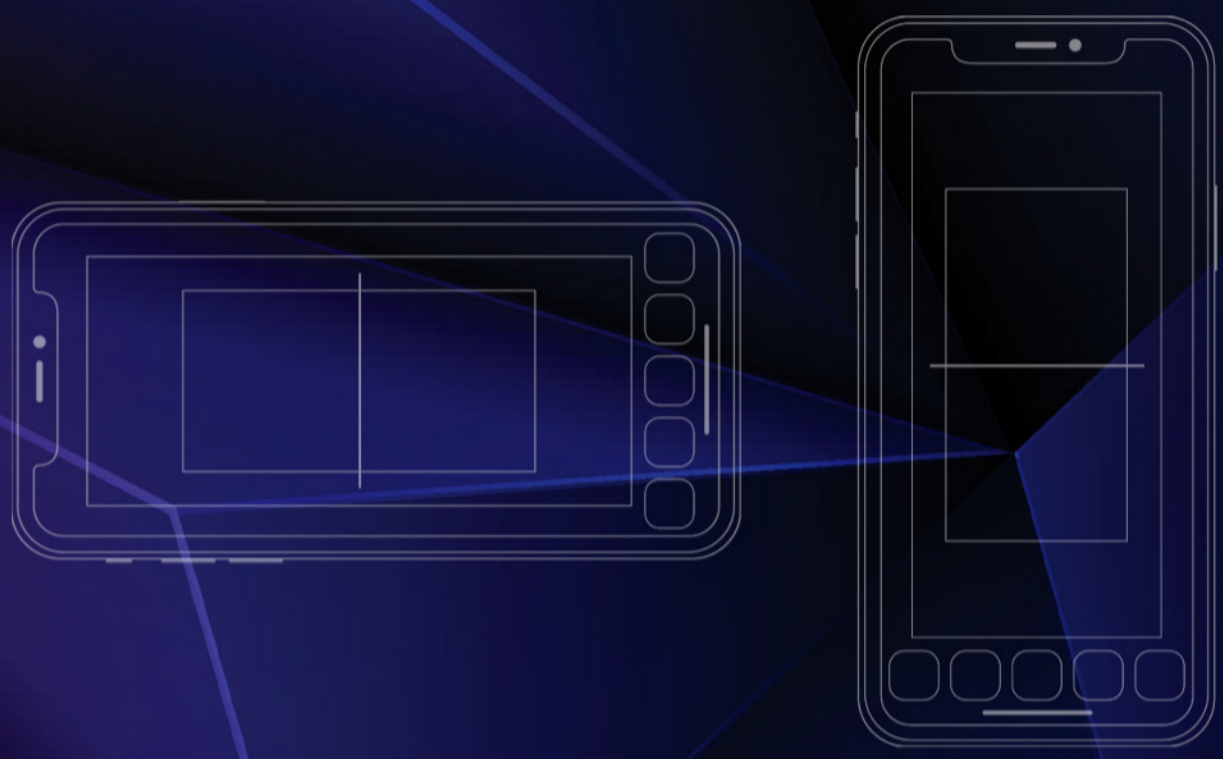

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NEW YORK CITY'S WATCHDOG AGENCY LAUNCHES PROBE AFTER COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE NYPD'S SOCIAL MEDIA USE

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New York City's watchdog agency has launched an investigation into allegations that the city's police department improperly used its official social media accounts to target public officials and private citizens.

The city Department of Investigation confirmed the probe in a statement Wednesday, saying it was prompted by recent requests from City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams and the Legal Aid Society asking it to look into the NYPD's social media policies and practices.

Adams, a Democrat, in her letter cited reports from The Associated Press and others highlighting how the department and some of its top officials have in recent months adopted a more aggressive online presence, using their accounts on the X platform to take on critics.

In one post featured in the reports, Chief of Patrol John Chell said a Democratic city councilmember who had criticized the NYPD for arresting pro-Palestinian protesters at Columbia University "hates our city." In another post, from February, Chell misidentified a judge in a criminal case, falsely accusing her of letting a "predator" loose on the city's streets.

"The recent deployment of official NYPD social media accounts to aggressively target public officials and civilians in our city, use dog whistles that can lead to threats and violence, and convey inaccurate information, is dangerous, unethical and unprofessional," Adams said in a statement.

The NYPD did not immediately return a request for comment.

The Legal Aid Society in its letter on Monday backed Adams' request, and also accused

the police department of using social media "unprofessionally and unethically" to discredit pro-Palestinian protesters at local colleges.

The legal aid group pointed to X posts from Chell and NYPD Deputy Commissioner of Operations Kaz Daughtry after the department cleared campus encampments last week.

One post the organization cited noted "a book on TERRORISM" was found at Columbia University's Hamilton Hall, saying it was among items — also including ear plugs, helmets, goggles, knives and ropes — that were "not the tools of students protesting" but rather of "people working on something nefarious." The title was, in fact, a nonfiction book on the subject published by Oxford University Press.

After receiving the two requests, "DOI has begun an investigation of the relevant social media use and exchanges, as well as applicable City policies," spokesperson Diane Struzzi said in a statement.

The Legal Aid Society had also asked for a probe into the general police response to the protests at universities, but the Department of Investigation declined to comment on that request.

In February, the NYPD's top spokesperson defended the department's social media tactics.

"We want to go on social media and push back on the misinformation that's out there," Tarik Sheppard told the AP at the time. "Because if we don't, it could cause damage to the reputation of our cops and the work that we're doing."

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NYPD
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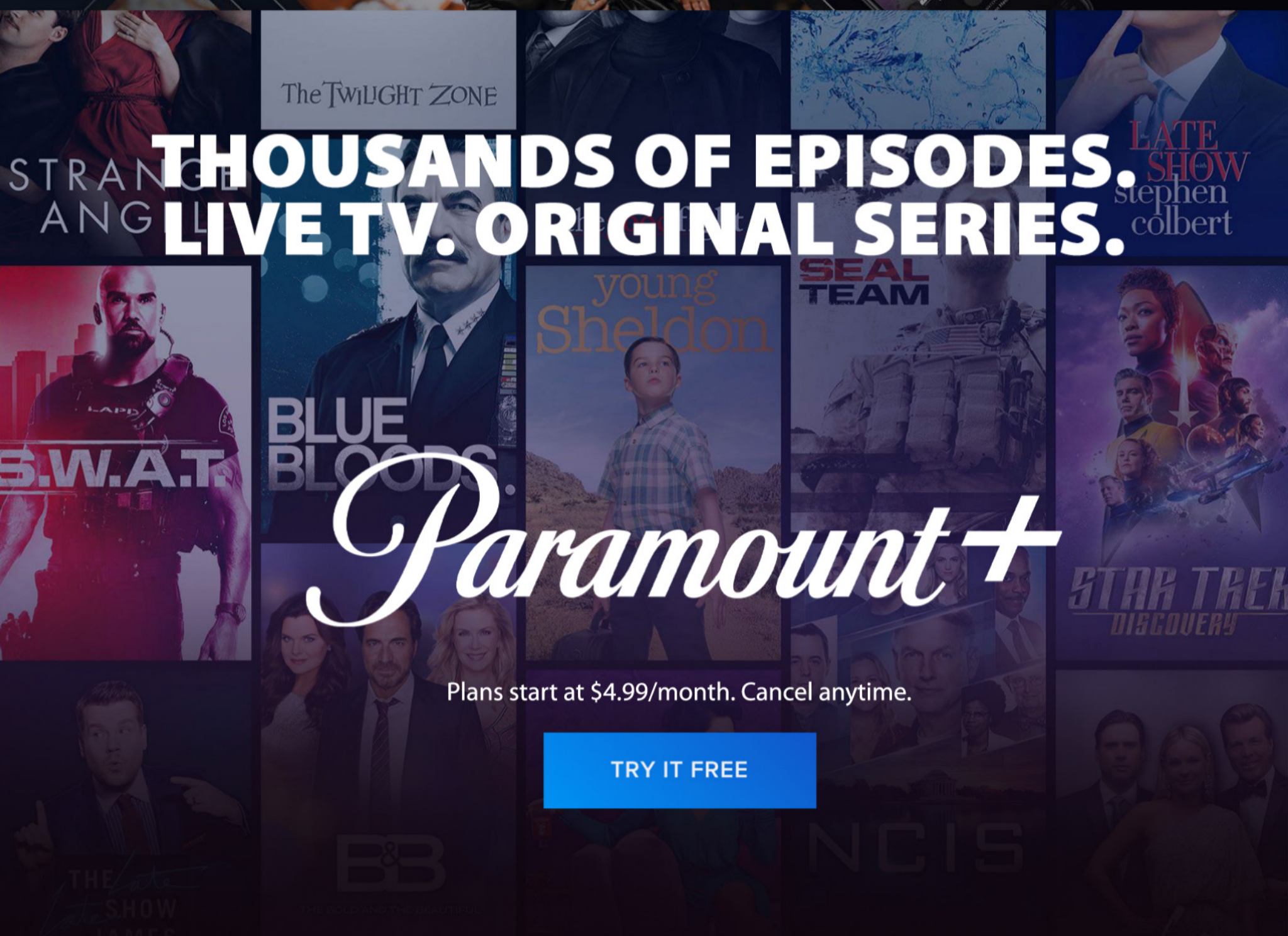

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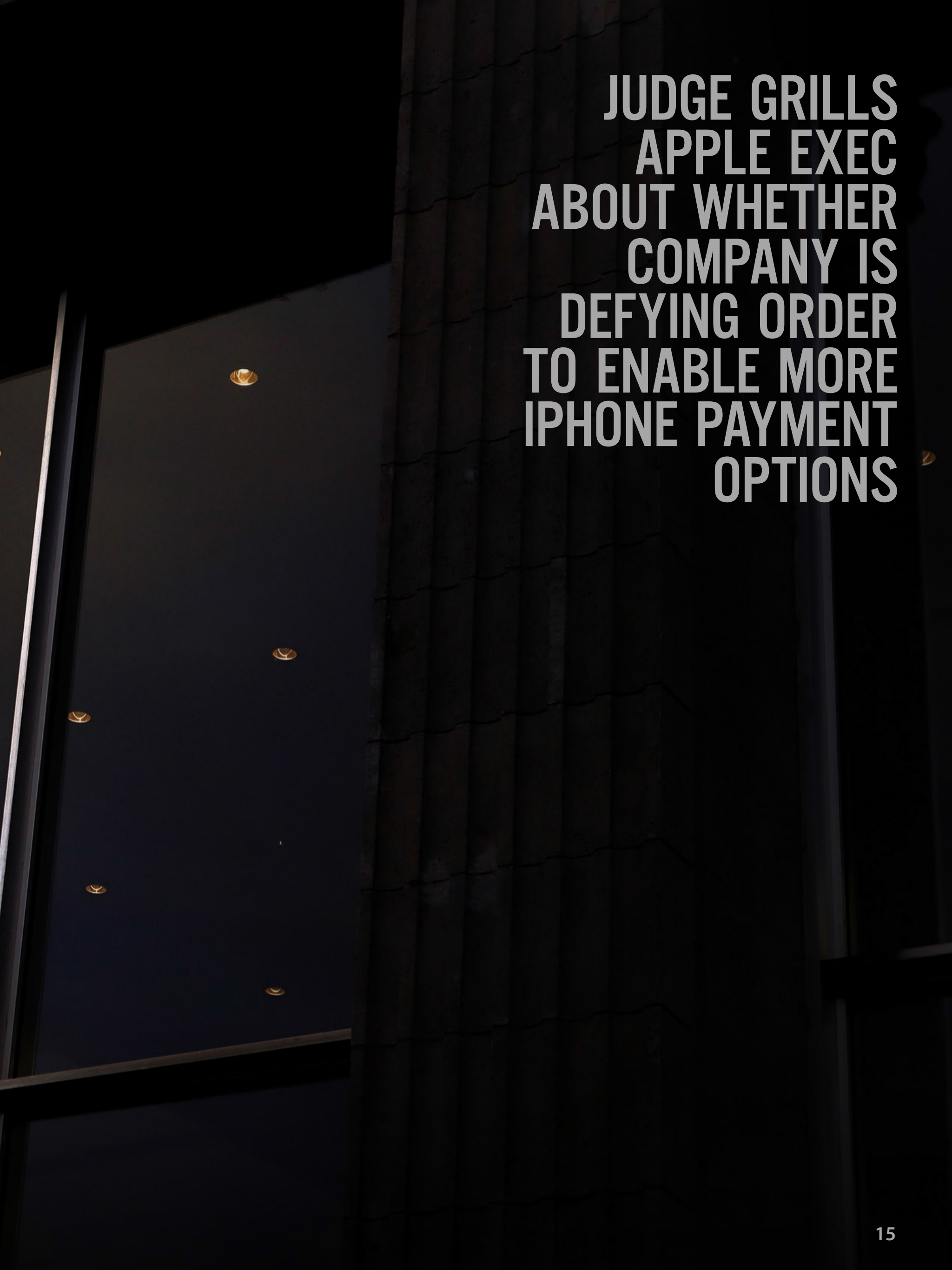


JUDGE GRILLS APPLE EXEC ABOUT WHETHER COMPANY IS DEFYING ORDER TO ENABLE MORE IPHONE PAYMENT OPTIONS

Image: Chris Delmas

A federal judge on Wednesday questioned whether Apple has set up a gauntlet of exasperating hurdles to discourage the use of alternative payment options in iPhone apps, despite a court order seeking to create more ways for consumers to pay for digital services.

The verbal sparring between Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers and the head of Apple's app store kicked off a hearing focused on whether Apple is still steering U.S. consumers to its once-exclusive app payment system in defiance of an injunction aimed at promoting more choices that could help lower prices.

Gonzalez Rogers' order requires Apple to allow app developers to display links to other options besides the company's own payment system in the U.S. Apple makes billions of dollars annually from that setup, which imposes commission ranging from 15% to 30% on digital transactions completed within the most popular iPhone apps.

Apple's app store and its commission system also is being targeted in another antitrust case recently filed by the U.S. Justice Department in a case alleging the iPhone walls off competition in a variety of ways that stifle competition and innovation.

Gonzalez Rogers often sounded frustrated and skeptical as she periodically chimed in during four hours of testimony from Matthew Fischer, the Apple executive in charge of the iPhone app store.

The tone of the judge's questions indicated she is concerned Apple's efforts to comply with her order have been primarily designed to protect

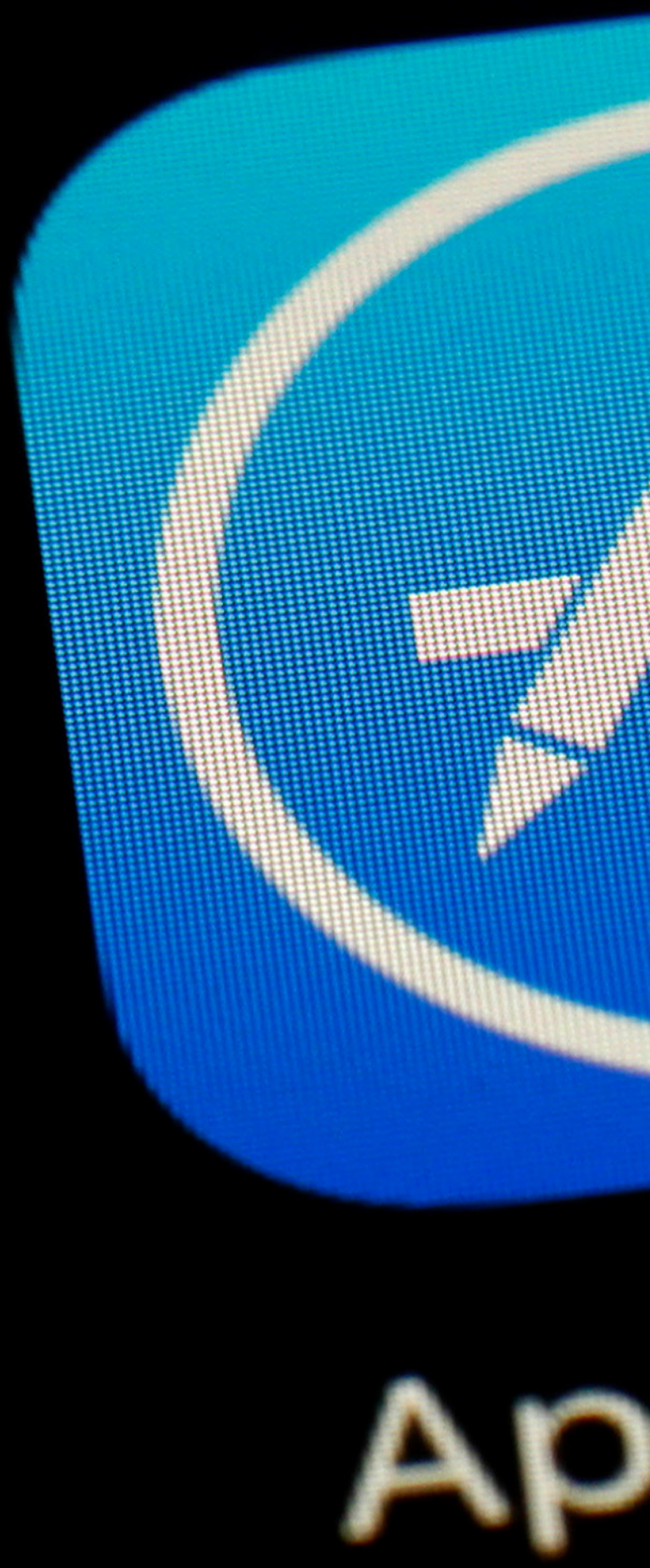
the company's profits instead of making it easier for iPhone users to switch to other in-app payment options, as she intended.

Gonzalez Rogers was particularly pointed as she grilled Fischer about whether Apple had deliberately made it more cumbersome and confusing for consumers to make digital purchases through alternative services.

"Other than to stifle competition, I can see no other answer," the judge said as she tried to dissect the rationale for Apple's design of alternative payment option system for iPhone apps.

Fischer maintained Apple is complying with the judge's order while still trying to shield iPhone users from bad actors on the internet and enabling the Cupertino, California, company to reap a return on its investments in the app store and other mobile software.

Toward that end, Apple has introduced a new commission structure ranging from 12% to 27% on digital transactions initiated from within an app and completed on an alternative payment option. After Gonzalez Rogers said it sounded like Apple was still collecting a "windfall," Fischer said the company expected its effective commission rate on digital transactions processed by alternative payment options to be about 18%.



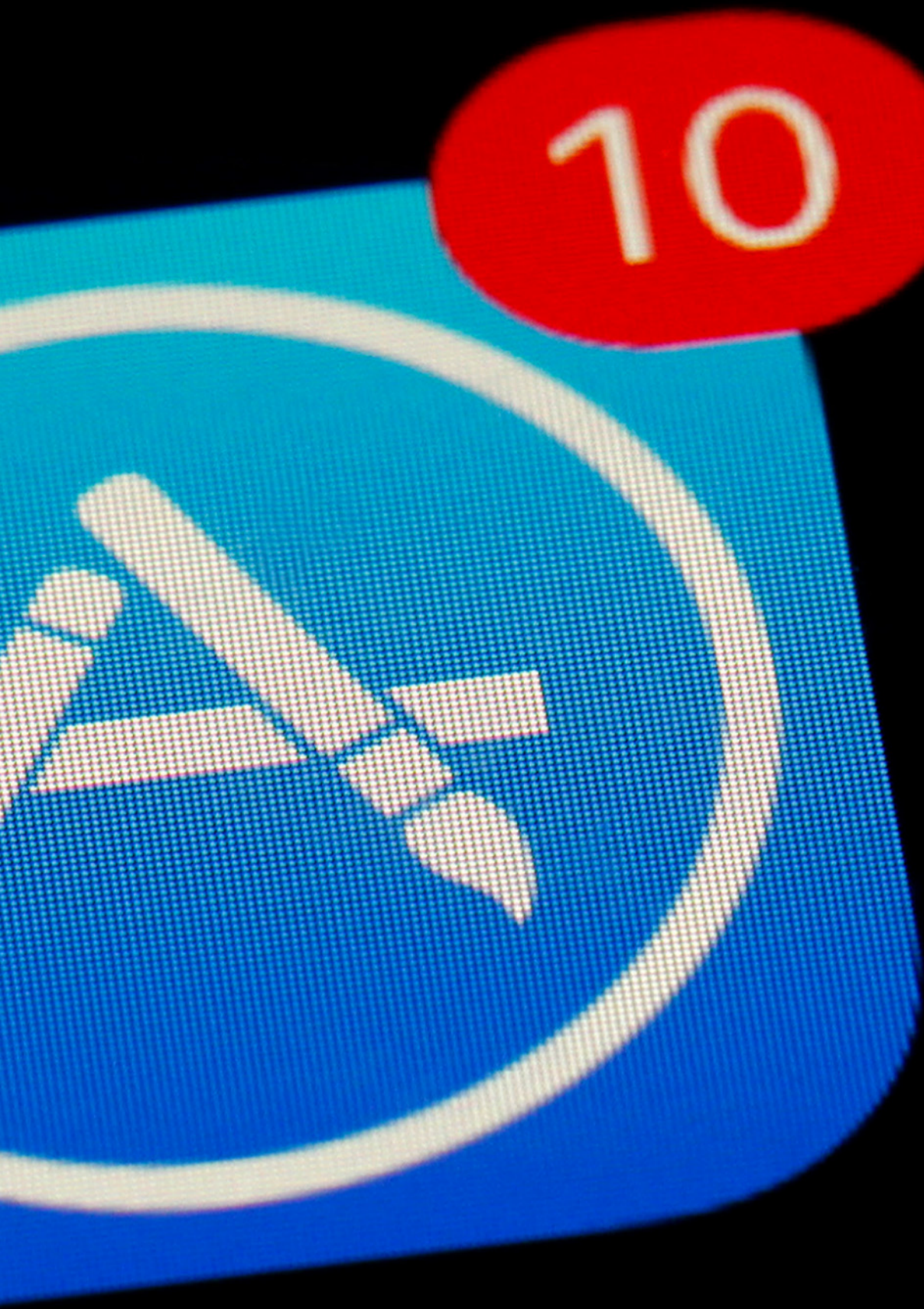


Image: Patrick Semansky

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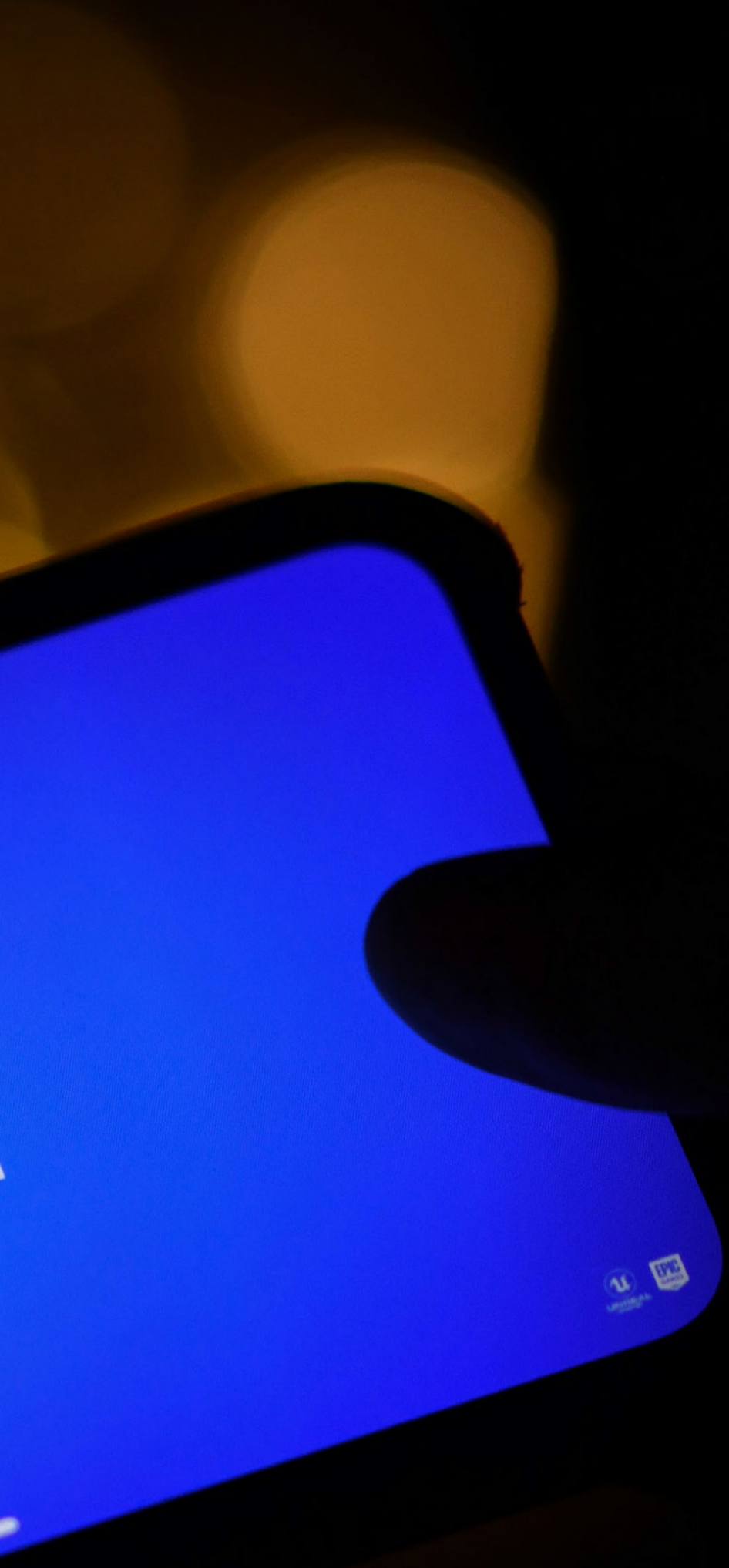

"We are running a business," Fischer said.

Apple spent more than two years trying to overturn the order that Gonzalez Rogers issued as part of a broader antitrust battle that the company won. The injunction requiring Apple to allow links to alternative app payments took effect in January after U.S. Supreme Court refused to review the case.

But Fischer disclosed Wednesday that Apple so far has only received and approved applications to display links to alternative payment systems from 38 apps so far — a fraction of the roughly 2 million iPhone apps available in the U.S. Fischer couldn't specify how many of those apps engage in digital transactions when asked by Gonzalez Rogers, who ordered Apple to provide the number as the proceedings progress this month.

Video game Epic Games cites the muted interest in applying for in-app links to alternative payment options as evidence that Apple was still rigging the system in its favor.

EPIC
GAMES

Image: Arda Kucukkaya

Epic, maker of the popular Fortnite video game, is trying to force Apple to make more sweeping changes to accommodate alternative payment options after it unsuccessfully tried to persuade Gonzalez Rogers that the iPhone app store had turned into a price-gouging monopoly during a 2021 trial.

The effort is being supported by Facebook and Instagram owner Meta Platforms, Elon Musk's X short-messaging service, music streaming service Spotify and long-time Apple rival Microsoft.

Apple's current alternative payment formula "is guaranteed to continue extracting excessive commissions from developers" while also blocking them from steering consumers to other places where they could buy the same digital services for lower prices, Epic asserted in documents leading up to Wednesday's hearing.

In its own pre-hearing briefs, Apple accused Epic of trying to get Gonzalez Rogers to micromanage its business in ways designed to boost the video game maker's profits.

"Epic has repeatedly made clear that what it wants is access to and use of Apple's tools and technologies without having to pay for them," Apple argued.

The court hearings are scheduled to resume next week when another top Apple executive, Phil Schiller, is expected to testify. Gonzalez Rogers hopes to wrap up the hearings by May 17, but told lawyers it might take longer than that.

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The World Video Game Hall of Fame inducted its 10th class of honorees Thursday, recognizing Asteroids, Myst, Resident Evil, SimCity and Ultima for their impacts on the video game industry and popular culture.

The inductees debuted across decades, advancing technologies along the way and expanding not only the number of players, but the ages and interests of those at the controls, Hall of Fame authorities said in revealing the winners. The Hall of Fame recognizes electronic games of all types — arcade, console, computer, handheld, and mobile.

The Class of 2024 was selected by experts from among a field of 12 finalists that also included Elite, Guitar Hero, Metroid, Neopets, Tokimeki Memorial, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater and You Don't Know Jack.

The honor for Atari's Asteroids comes 45 years after its 1979 debut in arcades, where it was Atari's bestselling coin-operated game. The game's glowing space-themed graphics and sound effects made their way from more than 70,000 arcade units into millions of living rooms when a home version of Asteroids was made available on the Atari 2600.

"Through endless variants and remakes across dozens of arcade, home, handheld, and mobile platforms, Asteroids made a simple, yet challenging game about blasting rocks into one of the most widely played and influential video games of all time," said Jeremy Saucier, assistant vice president for interpretation and electronic games at The Strong museum, where the World Video Game Hall of Fame is located.

The next inductee to debut was Ultima, not

necessarily a household name but a force in the development of the computer role-playing genre, digital preservation director Andrew Borman said in the news release. Designed by Richard Garriott and released in 1981, Utima: The First Age of Darkness inspired eight sequels and is credited with inspiring later role-playing games like Dragon Quest and Final Fantasy.

The urban design-inspired SimCity was released by Maxis in 1989 and found an audience among adults as well as children who were challenged to build their own city and respond to problems. Among the sequels and offshoots it inspired was 2016 World Video Game Hall of Fame inductee The Sims.

“At a time when many people thought of video games in terms of arcade shooters or console platformers, SimCity appealed to players who wanted intellectually stimulating fun on their newly bought personal computers,” Aryol Prater, research specialist for Black play and culture, said.

The adventure game Myst sold more than 6 million copies, making it a best-selling computer game in the 1990s. The 1993 Broderbund release used early CD-ROM technology and allowed for a level of player immersion that until then had not been available in computer games, the Hall of Fame said.

“Few other games can match Myst’s ability to open imaginative worlds,” collections manager Kristy Hisert said. “It was a work of artistic genius that captured the imagination of an entire generation of computer game players, and its influence can be seen in many of today’s open-world games.”

The final honoree, Resident Evil's "cheesy B-movie dialogue, engrossing gameplay, and chilling suspense" helped popularize the "survival horror" genre following its release by Capcom in 1996 and offered mature entertainment for older teenagers and adults, video game curator Lindsey Kurano said. Created by game director Shinji Mikami, it also inspired an action horror film series that as of 2022 had grossed more than $1.2 billion, according to the Hall of Fame.

Anyone can nominate a game to the World Video Game Hall of Fame. Members of an international selection advisory committee submit their top three choices from the list of finalists. Fans also are invited to weigh in online. The public as a whole is treated as a single committee member.

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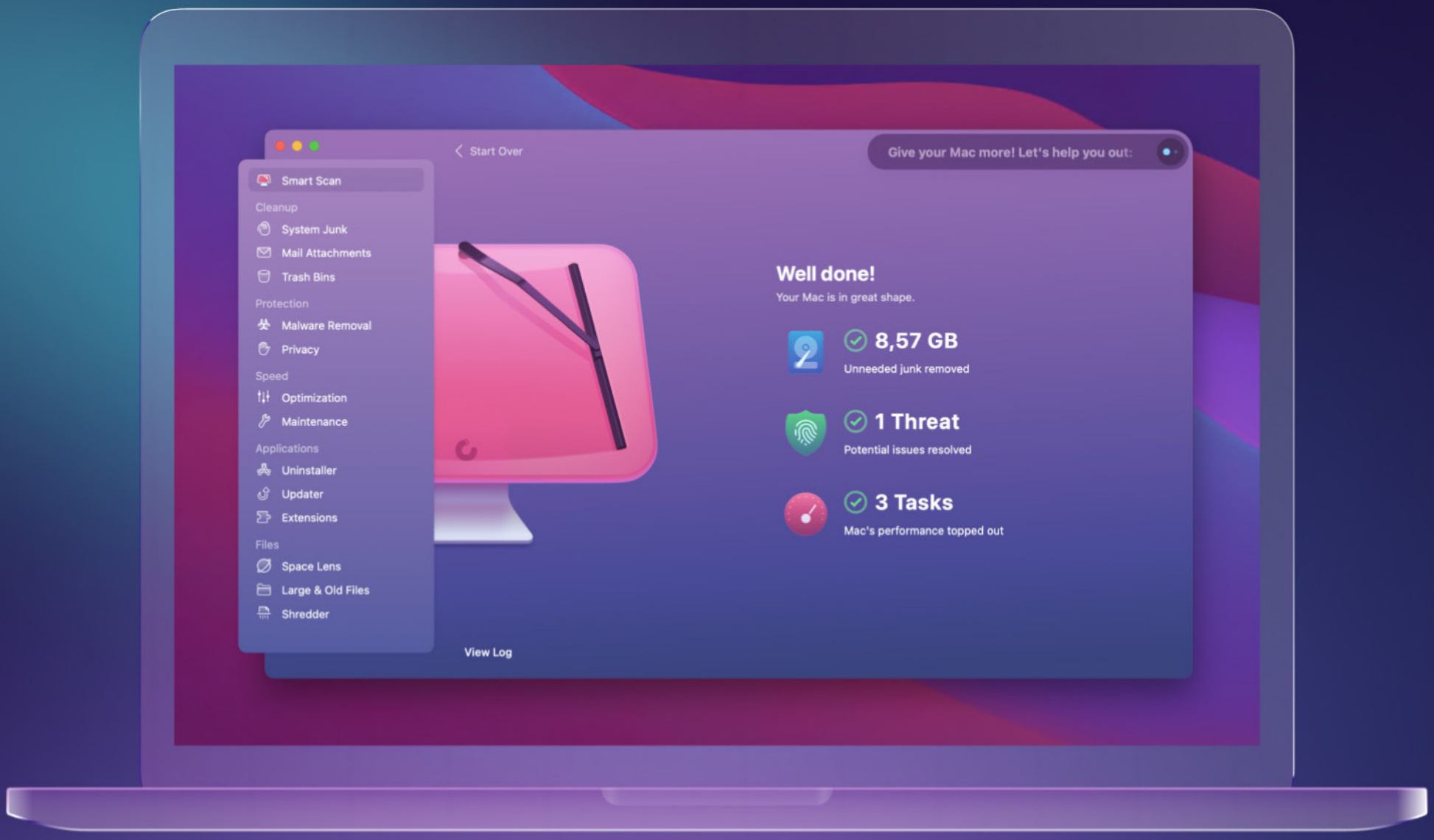

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TIKTOK TO START LABELING AI-GENERATED CONTENT AS TECHNOLOGY BECOMES MORE UNIVERSAL

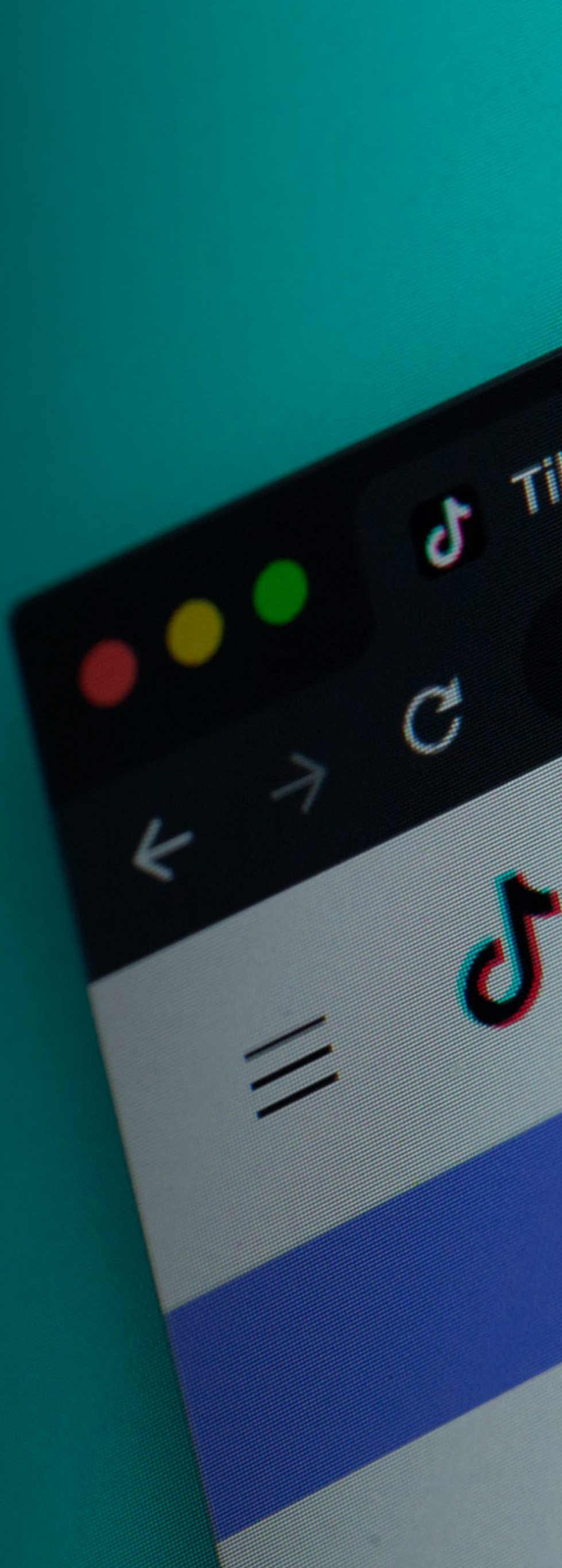
Image: Dado Ruvic

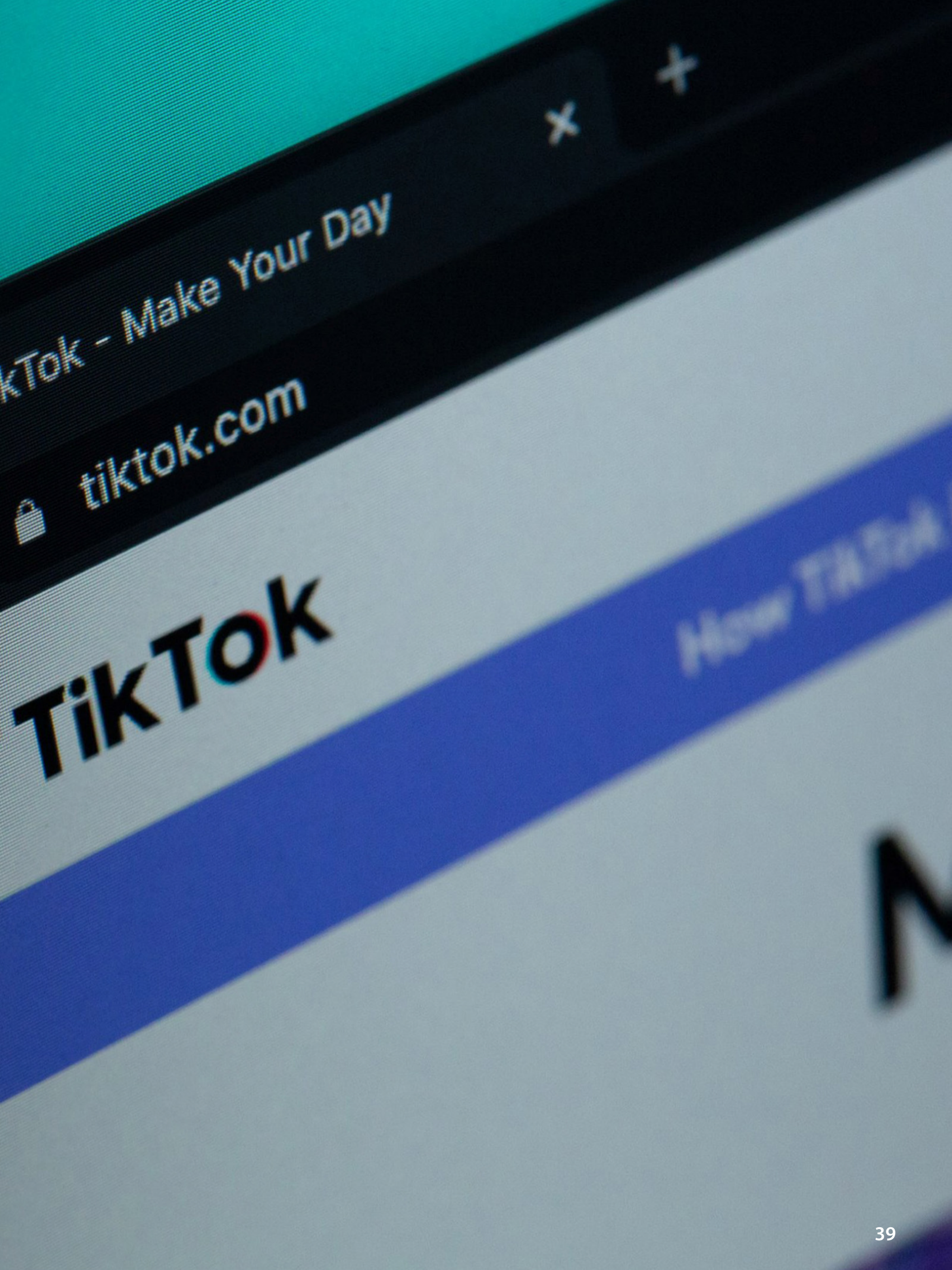
TikTok will begin labeling content created using artificial intelligence when it's uploaded from outside its own platform.

TikTok says its efforts are an attempt to combat misinformation from being spread on its social media platform.

"AI enables incredible creative opportunities, but can confuse or mislead viewers if they don't know content was AI-generated," the company said in a prepared statement Thursday. "Labeling helps make that context clear—which is why we label AIGC made with TikTok AI effects, and have required creators to label realistic AIGC for over a year."

TikTok said that it's teaming with the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity and will use their Content Credentials technology. The company said that the technology can attach metadata to content, which it can use to instantly recognize and label AI-generated content. TikTok said its use of the capability started Thursday on images and videos and will be coming to audio-only content soon.

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TikTok

Over the upcoming months, Content Credentials will be attached to content made on TikTok, which will remain on content when downloaded. This will help identify AI-generated content that's made on TikTok and help people learn when, where and how the content was made or edited. Other platforms that adopt Content Credentials will be able to automatically label it.

TikTok said it's the first video-sharing platform to put the credentials into practice and will join the Adobe-led Content Authenticity Initiative to help push the adoption of the credentials within the industry.

"Our users and our creators are so excited about AI and what it can do for their creativity and their ability to connect with audiences." Adam Presser, TikTok's Head of Operations & Trust and Safety told ABC News. "And at the same time, we want to make sure that people have that ability to understand what fact is and what is fiction."

The announcement initially came on ABC's "Good Morning America" on Thursday.

TikTok's policy in the past has been to encourage users to label content that has been generated or significantly edited by AI. It also requires users to label all AI-generated content where it contains realistic images, audio, and video.

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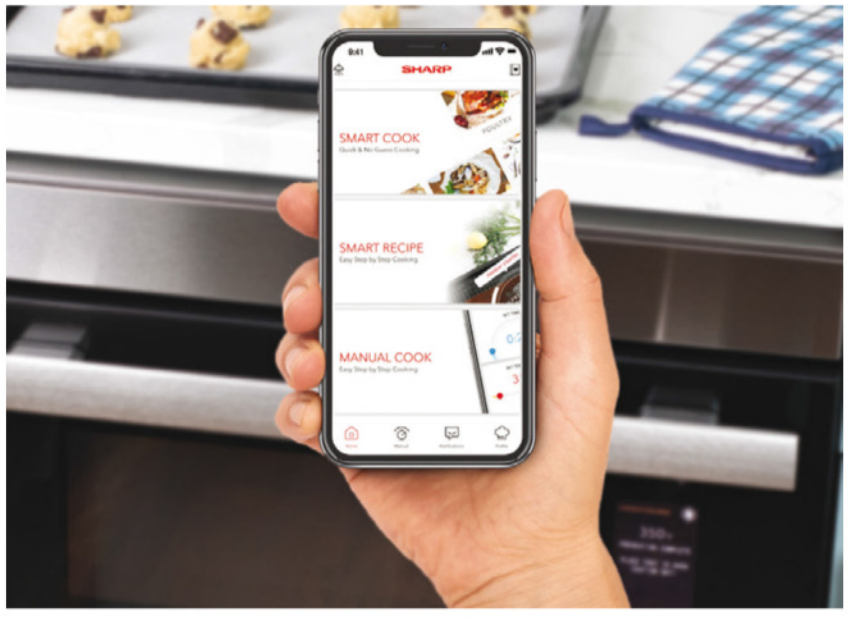

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WE KNOW LATE-NIGHT SCREENS ARE BAD FOR SLEEP. HOW DO YOU STOP DOOMSCROLLING IN BED?

Like many of us, Jessica Peoples has heard the warnings about excessive screen time at night. Still, she estimates spending 30 to 60 minutes on her phone before going to sleep, mostly scrolling through social media.

"Recently, I've been trying to limit the amount," says Peoples, a discrimination investigator with the state of New Jersey. "I do notice that how much time I spend affects how long it takes to fall asleep."

Over half of Americans spend time on their phones within an hour of going to sleep, according to a survey by the National Sleep Foundation. That's the very latest we should shut off devices, experts say.

The brain needs to wind down long before bedtime to get the restorative deep sleep that helps the body function, said Melissa Milanak, an associate professor at Medical University of South Carolina specializing in sleep health.

"You wouldn't take a casserole out of the oven and stick it right in the fridge. It needs to cool down," Milanak said. "Our brains need to do that too."

Upending your bedtime routine may not be easy, but insufficient sleep has long been linked to anxiety, obesity and other negative outcomes. Research shows smartphones are particularly disruptive to the circadian clock that regulates sleep and other hormones.

“There are a million and one ways screens create problems with sleep,” said Lisa Strauss, a licensed psychologist specializing in cognitive behavioral treatment of sleep disorders.

The brain, she said, processes electric light — not just a smartphone’s much-maligned blue light — as sunshine. That suppresses melatonin production, delaying deep sleep. Even very little bright-light exposure in bed has an impact.

IT'S NOT JUST THE LIGHT THAT KEEPS YOU UP

Of course, doomscrolling through the news, checking emails or being tempted by ever more tailored videos on social media has its own consequences.

So-called "technostress" amps you up — possibly even triggering the brain's flight or flight response. And algorithms designed to be engaging compel many social media users to scroll longer than they intended.

"Now it's 30 minutes later, when you wanted to watch a couple videos and fall asleep," Milanak said.

Though much of the scientific research on online media focuses on adolescents and young adults, Strauss said most of her clients struggling with insomnia are middle-aged. "People go down these rabbit holes of videos, and more and more people are getting hooked," she said.

HOW TO BREAK THE HABIT

The issue is not just curtailing phone use in bed, but phone use at night. That means redesigning your routine, particularly if you use your phone as a way to decompress.

It helps to create replacement behaviors that are rewarding. An obvious contender is reading a physical book (e-readers are better than phones but still cast artificial light). Milanak also suggests using that hour before bed to take a warm bath, listen to a podcast, make school lunches for the next day, spend time with family or call a relative in another time zone.

"Make a list of things you like that never get done. That's a great time to do stuff that doesn't involve screens," she said. Using a notepad to write down the to-do list for the next day helps keep you from ruminating in bed.

Do those activities in another room to train yourself to associate the bed with falling asleep. If there's no other private refuge at home, "establish a distinct microenvironment for wakefulness and sleep," Strauss said. That could mean sitting on the other side of the bed to read, or even just turning the other way around with your feet at the headboard.

Finally, sequester the phone in another room, or at least across the room. "Environmental control can work better than will power, especially when we're tired," she said.

WHAT IF STOPPING DOESN'T FEEL REALISTIC?

There are ways to reduce the harm. Setting the phone on night mode at a scheduled time every day is better than nothing, as is reducing screen brightness every night. Hold the phone far from your face and at an oblique angle to minimize the strength of the light.

Minimize tempting notifications by putting the phone on do not disturb, which can be adjusted to allow calls and messages from certain people — say, an ailing parent or a kid off at university — to go through. But none of these measures give you carte blanche to look at whatever you want at night, Strauss said.

She also recommended asking yourself why checking social media has become your late-night reward.

"Think about the larger structure of the day," she said. Everyone deserves solitary moments to relax, but "maybe be more self-indulgent earlier so you have what you need."

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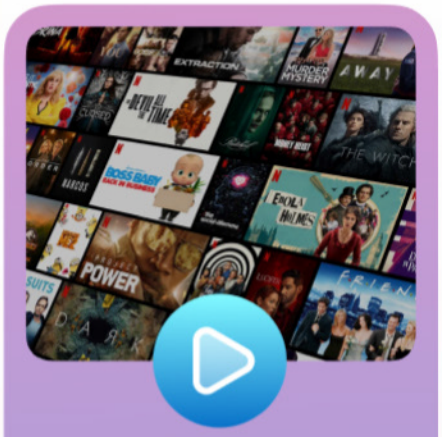

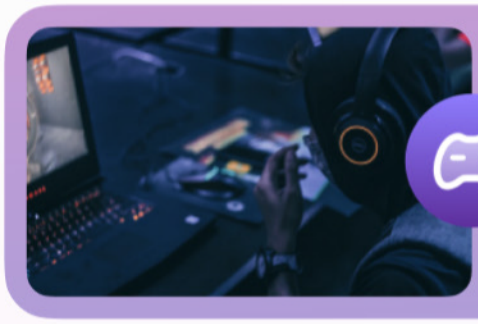

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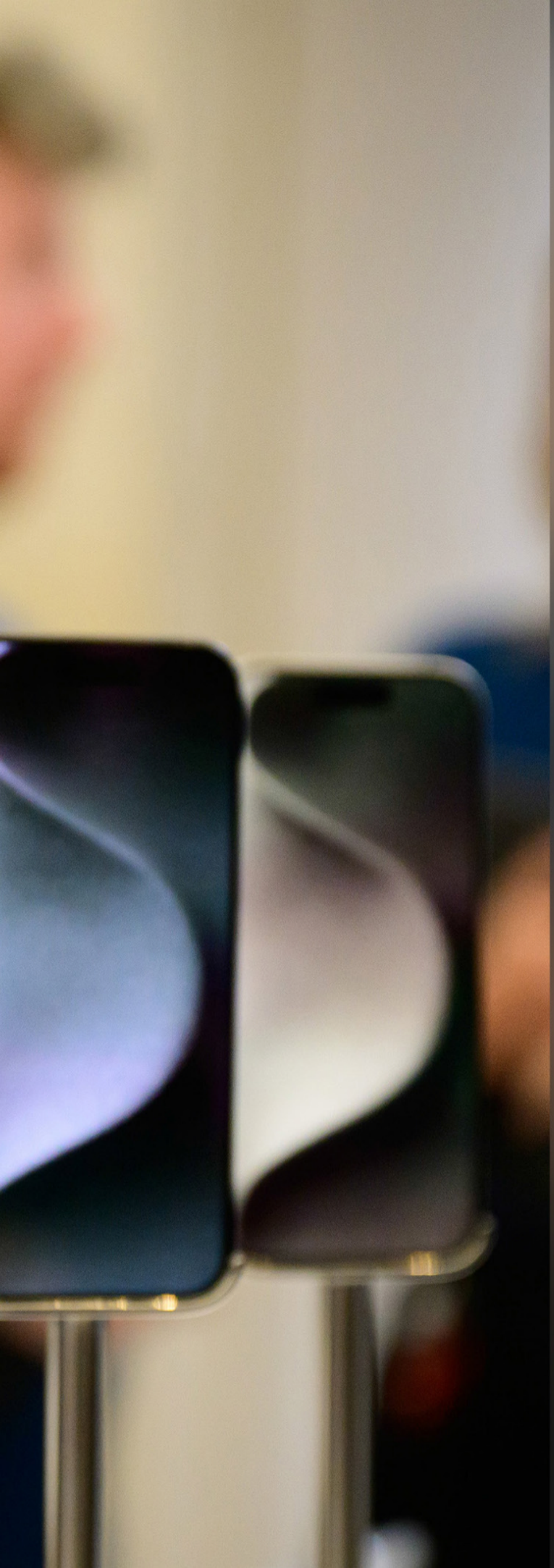
APPLE'S QUARTERLY IPHONE SALES PLUNGE 10%, BUT STOCK PRICE SURGES ON DIVIDEND, STOCK BUYBACK NEWS



Apple last week disclosed its steepest quarterly decline in iPhone sales since the pandemic's outset, deepening a slump that's increasing the pressure on the trendsetting company to spruce up its products with more artificial intelligence.

The 10% drop in year-over-year iPhone sales for the January-March period is latest sign of weakness in a product that generates most of Apple's revenue. It marked the biggest drop in iPhone sales since July-September period in 2020, when production bottlenecks caused by factory closures during the pandemic resulted in a delayed release of that year's model.

The current iPhone downturn was the main reason Apple's revenue for the latest quarter decreased 4% from last year to $90.8 billion. It marked the fifth consecutive quarter that Apple's revenue dipped from the previous year. Apple's profit in the past quarter totaled $23.64 billion, or $1.53 per share, a 2% dip from last year.

But both Apple's revenue and earnings per share came in slightly above analysts projections, according to FactSet Research. Apple also predicted its revenue for the April-June quarter will rise modestly from a year ago, which would end the recent streak of erosion.

Part of the iPhone deterioration during the first three months of the year stemmed from a big boost in sales during the same period last year when Apple said it was filling pent-up demand caused by pandemic-driven shipment delays.

Even as it stumbles slightly, Apple remains one of the world's most prosperous companies. The Cupertino, California, company hammered home that point by announcing a 4% increase in its quarterly dividend to 25 cents per share.

Image: Aly Song

Image: Stephanie Lecocq

The company also committed to spending $110 billion buying back its own stock, a move that investors cheered but may fuel criticism that Apple is spending more money catering to Wall Street than creating more innovative products.

Bolstered by the increased dividend and stock repurchase commitment, Apple's shares rose nearly 7% in extended trading after the news came out. The stock price has fallen 10% so far this year, erasing about $300 billion in stockholder wealth.

Although investors have been dismayed by the weakening iPhone sales, they are also concerned Apple may be losing its edge as other tech giants such as Microsoft and Google sprint out to the early lead in artificial intelligence technology that is expected to reshape the industry and technology.

The latest quarterly report "leaves no margin for doubt about Apple's current state of affairs," said Investing.com analyst Thomas Monteiro. "More than ever in the past decade, the company needs new products and solutions."

Apple is widely expected to unveil more AI services in June during an annual conference showcasing the next version of its software for the iPhone and Mac computers.

"We believe in the transformative power and promise of AI and we believe we have advantages that will differentiate us in this new era," Apple CEO Tim Cook assured analysts during a conference while promising more details will be announced.

Weak sales in China were again a factor in the latest quarter, with revenue in that region falling 8% from last year to $16.37 billion as rival smartphone makers gained ground in one of the company's largest markets. Even so, analysts had been anticipating an even bigger sales decline in the results, providing investors with a measure of relief.

Apple had a few bright spots in the past quarter too, most notably in its service division, which saw its revenue rise 14% from the year before to $23.87 billion.

The division reaps a significant portion of its revenue from a lucrative deal that locks in Google as the search engine that automatically answers queries on the iPhone — an arrangement that is a focal point of an antitrust trial currently wrapping up in Washington.

Commissions collected on digital transactions within iPhone apps are also a major revenue source within Apple's services division, an area being targeted in a U.S. Justice Department lawsuit alleging the company is running an illegal monopoly that locks out competition to the detriment of consumers.

That case is expected to take several years to resolve, but European regulators already are forcing Apple to allow more alternatives to its proprietary iPhone app store as part of the Digital Markets Act.

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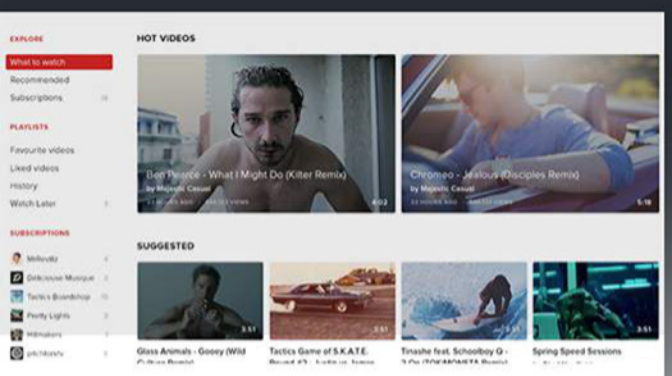

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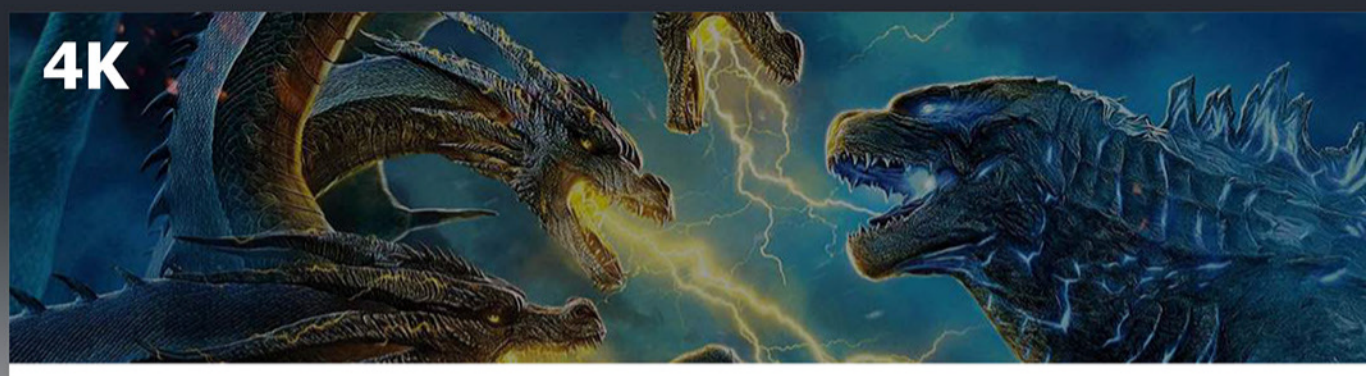

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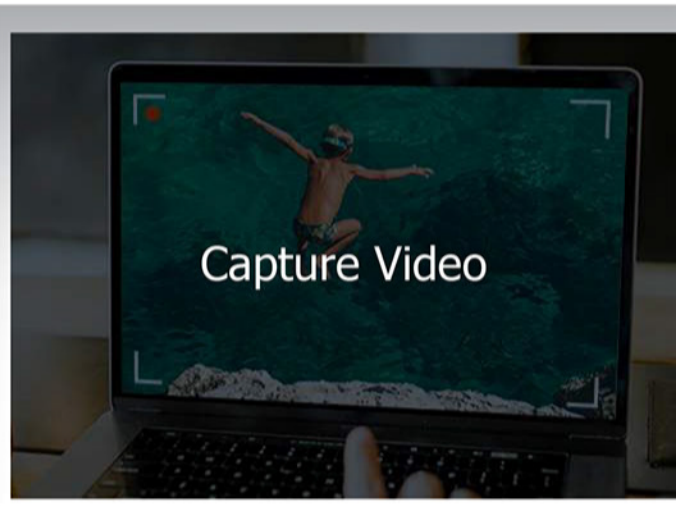

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New-Gen iPads

2024 AIR AND PRO LINES BRING IDEAS TO LIFE LIKE NEVER BEFORE

delete
return
shift

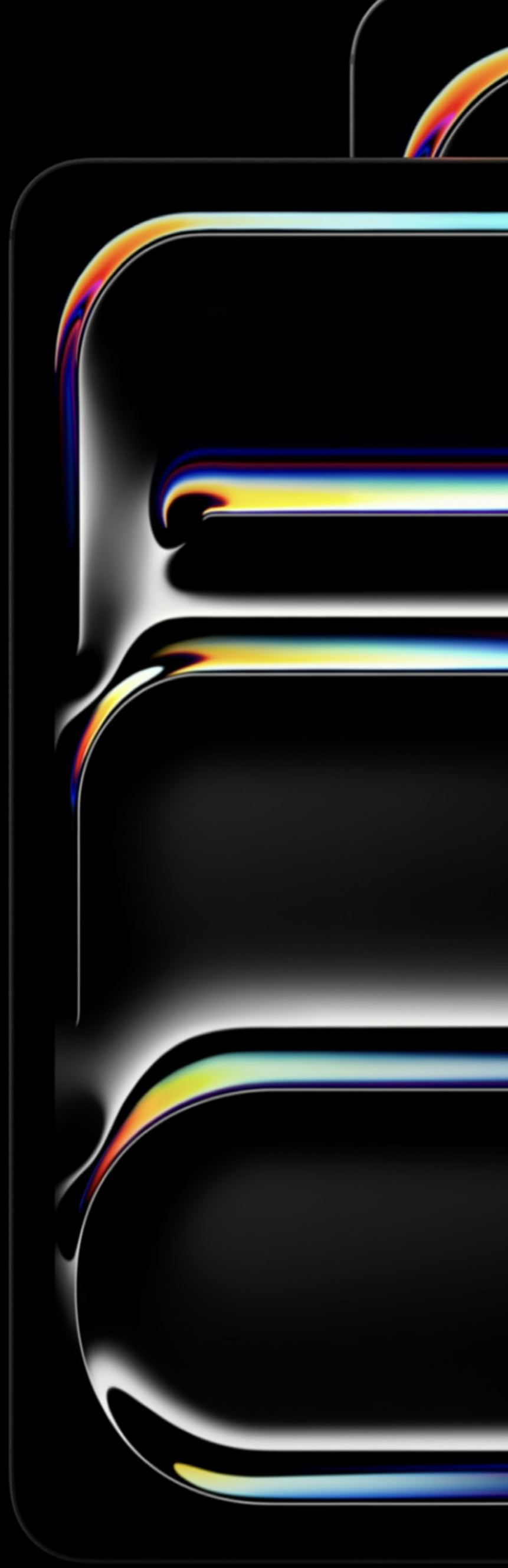
At this year's Let Loose Event, Apple unveiled all-new iPad Airs, iPad Pros, and new accessories like the Apple Pencil Pro. These devices offer game-changing graphics and outrageous performance and showcase the powerful M4 chip for the first time.

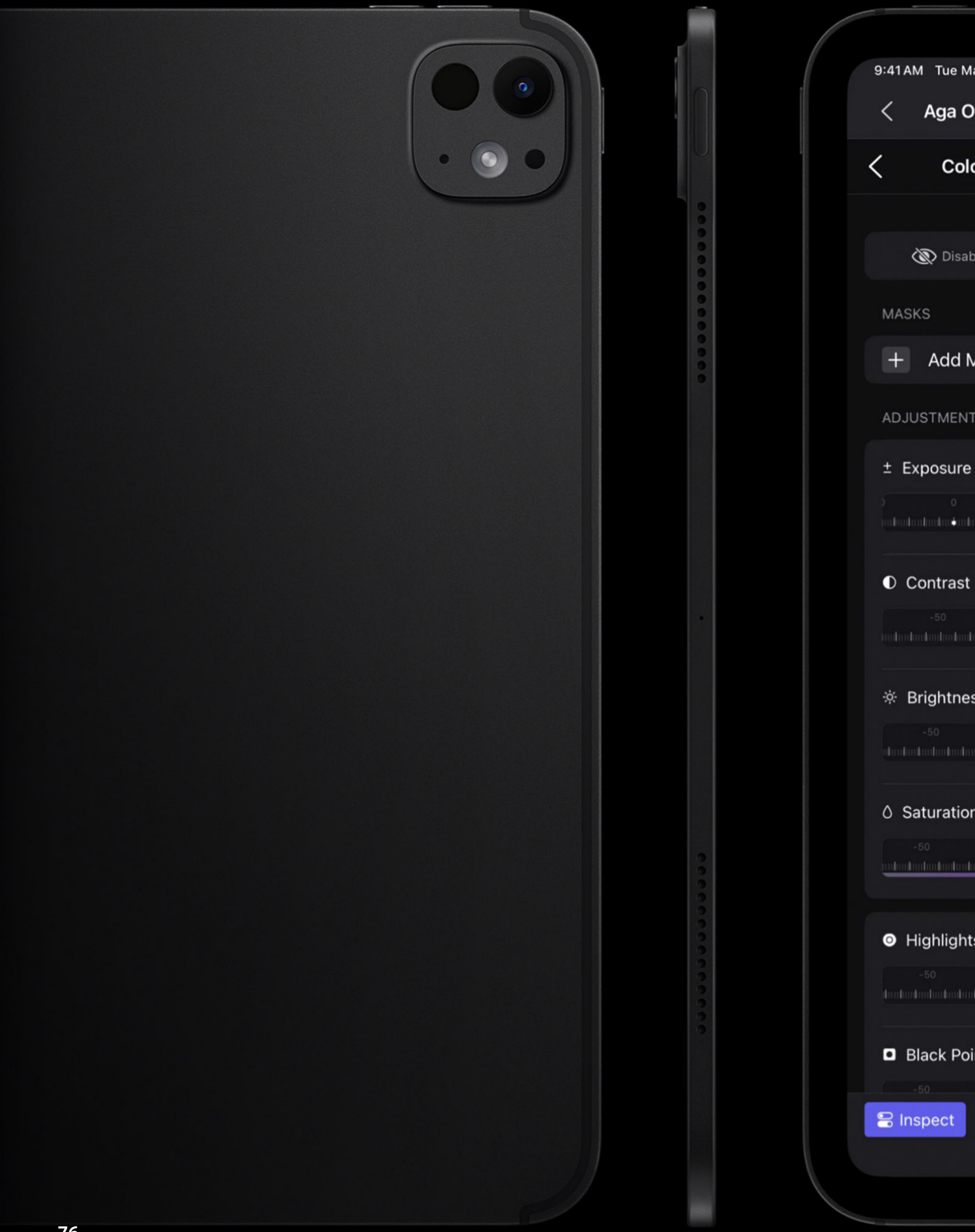
APPLE'S THINNEST PRODUCT

The latest iPad Pro incorporates groundbreaking features and technological advancements. The redesigned models are equipped with the M4 chip, boast Ultra Retina XDR OLED displays, and a nano-texture display option, setting a new standard for the iPad lineup. The new iPad Pro models present a considerably slimmer profile, **thinner than an iPod Nano** whilst offering display sizes of 11 and 13 inches. The 11-inch variant measures just **5.3mm in thickness and weighs under a pound,** making it exceptionally portable. **The larger 13-inch model, while maintaining a slim 5.1mm profile,** is notably lighter than its predecessor, weighing a quarter pound less. Apple proudly claims these models as the thinnest products in its portfolio to date. The inclusion of graphite sheets and copper within the main housing enhances the thermal design, allowing for better heat dissipation.

One of the most striking features of the new iPad Pro is the **Ultra Retina XDR OLED display** which employs a tandem two-panel system. This design enables the device to achieve impressive fullscreen brightness levels—up to 1,000 nits for standard dynamic range (SDR) content and 1,600 nits for peak high dynamic range brightness. This results in richer blacks, more detailed shadows in low-light conditions, brighter highlights, and overall superior luminance. The display's responsiveness to motion content is enhanced, making for a smoother visual experience.

The iPad Pro's heart lies in the M4 chip, **fabricated using advanced 3nm technology.** This chip features a new display engine and

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supports hardware-accelerated mesh shading and ray tracing, providing up to 50% faster CPU performance compared to the M2 chip in previous models, and a quadruple increase in rendering performance. For an improved user experience in video calling, the 12-megapixel front-facing camera has been relocated to the side of the device. The rear camera setup now supports **ProRes video recording and Smart HDR 4,** with an Adaptive TrueTone flash that enhances document scanning capabilities.

For the first time, **Apple offers a nano-texture display option** for those seeking minimal glare while maintaining exceptional image quality. Reflecting Apple's commitment to environmental sustainability, the iPad Pro enclosure is crafted from 100% recycled aluminum and is available in Silver and Space Black. For the first time, with the environment in mind, Apple has **dropped the free stickers that include out-of-the-box stickers.** The 11-inch iPad Pro is priced starting at $999, while the 13-inch model begins at $1,299.

11″ 13″

Up to

2TB

storage

Nano-tex

Thunderbolt / USB 4

Four speaker audio

ProMotion

Ultra Ref

Magic Keyboard

5G

ture glass

M4

Adaptive
True Tone
flash

LiDAR
Scanner

Face ID

ProRes

tina XDR

Landscape 12MP
front camera

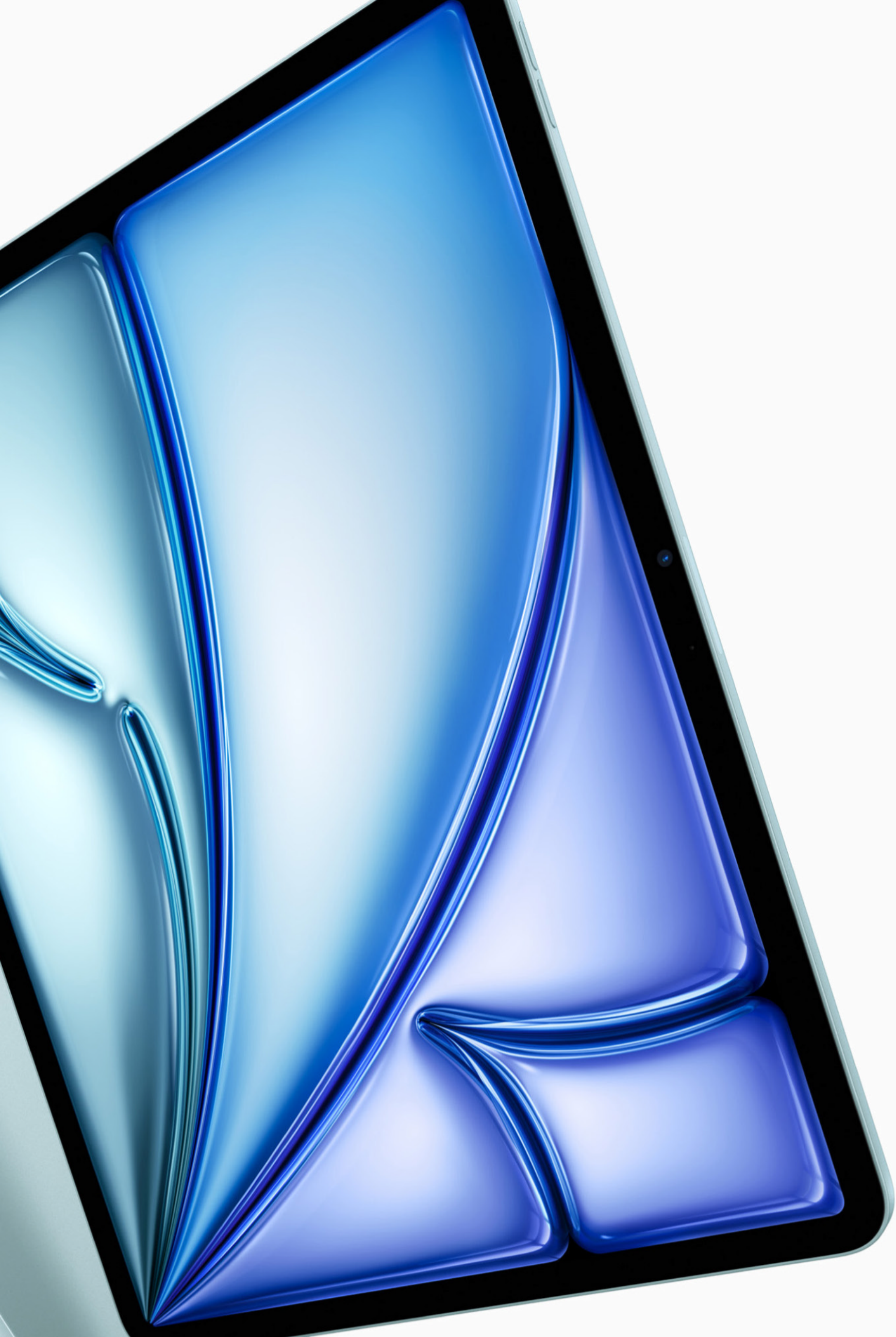
Apple Pencil Pro

WALKING ON AIR

It wasn't just the Pro model that received an upgrade at Apple's Let Loose event - the iPad Air was also given some love, featuring new 11-inch and 13-inch versions with a landscape FaceTime camera, AI enhancements, and superior sound, especially in the larger model. The redesigned iPad Air brings some of the premium features previously reserved for the iPad Pro into a more affordable package. The 13-inch model offers 30% more screen real estate compared to its 11-inch counterpart, catering to users seeking a larger display for their work and entertainment needs. At the heart of these updates is the **Apple M2 chip,** which boasts an 8-core CPU and a 10-core GPU. This setup, combined with enhanced memory bandwidth, results in the new iPad Air being nearly 50% faster than its predecessor equipped with the M1 chip. When compared to the iPad Air with A14 Bionic, the new model with M2 offers up to three times the performance.

Sound quality has also seen significant improvements; the 13-inch model now provides double the bass of the previous generation, enriching the audio experience for media consumption. Connectivity is faster than ever with support for Wi-Fi 6E, offering up to twice the performance of earlier generations. The iPad Air's 12MP Ultra Wide FaceTime camera has been **repositioned along the device's longest edge, optimizing camera angles** during video calls. Enhanced with Center Stage technology, the camera employs machine learning to keep participants within the frame, dynamically adjusting the focus during calls.

Apple is keen to highlight the **iPad Air's**



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Génial!
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Images historiques
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NAMIQUE
présentation
Réviser s'il vous plaît
Diapositives à réviser
INDEX
1. LES ORIGINES
2. L'AÉRODYNAMIQUE
3. VOLER SUR DES SKIS
4. PORTANCE ET DISTANCE
5. LE PARADOXE DU VENT
6. ÉQUATIONS
GRANDE PORTANCE
Mémos
Pour référer
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En tu barrio
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Calendario
Presupuesto
Inicio
Insertar
Dibujar
Fórmulas
Datos
Revisar

capabilities in artificial intelligence which are more pronounced in the new models thanks to the advanced hardware. The device is also fully compatible with the latest accessories, such as the Apple Pencil Pro with Hover support and the Magic Keyboard, enhancing its usability and precision for a variety of tasks. Both models feature an LCD Liquid Retina display and are available in several new colors, including blue, purple, Starlight, and Space Grey. The enclosures are made from 100% recycled aluminum, underscoring Apple's ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability.

Speaking of the new models, Bob Borchers, Apple's vice president of Product Marketing, said: "So many users — from students, to content creators, to small businesses, and more — love iPad Air for its performance, portability, and versatility, all at an affordable price. Today, iPad Air gets even better. We're so excited to introduce the redesigned 11-inch and all-new 13-inch iPad Air, offering two sizes for the first time. With its combination of a brilliant Liquid Retina display, the phenomenal performance of the M2 chip, incredible AI capabilities, and its colorful, portable design with support for new accessories, iPad Air is more powerful and versatile than ever." The iPad Air starts at $599 for the 11-inch model and $799 for the 13-inch model, with storage options ranging from 128GB to 1TB.

100% recycled aluminum enclosure

M2

Landscape 12MP front camera

Liquid Retina display

Touch ID

Wi-Fi 6E

50%

Faster than iPad Air with M1 chip

3x

Faster than iPad Air with A12 Bionic chip

Landscape stereo audio

P

5G

Four colors

Up to
1TB
storage

12MP
camera

11″

13″

Magic
Keyboard

ALL-NEW ACCESSORIES

Perhaps one of the most exciting things about this year's iPad event was the introduction of new accessories designed for the iPad Pro. An all-new Magic Keyboard, which has been reimagined to be thinner and lighter, still retains its iconic floating design but now comes with several new features into the keyboard, including a dedicated function row with screen brightness controls. This addition aims to improve accessibility and ease of use. The inclusion of an aluminum palm rest and a larger trackpad with haptic feedback enhances the tactile response, making the **experience of using it closely resemble that of a MacBook.** Available in two colors to match the latest iPad Pro models, the new Magic Keyboard is priced at $299 for the 11-inch version and $349 for the 13-inch model.

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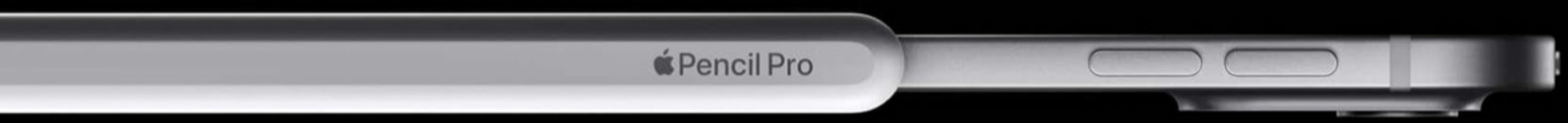
The Apple Pencil Pro, on the other hand, introduces several new features that set it apart from its predecessors. A notable addition is the squeeze gesture enabled by a new sensor in the barrel of the pencil. This feature allows users to quickly access a tool palette for switching between tools, line weights, and colors, streamlining the creative process. The inclusion of a gyroscope enhances the precision of pen and brush tools, enabling users to manipulate shapes and lines with greater control. The Apple Pencil Pro is also equipped with a haptic engine

that provides tactile feedback during specific actions, such as squeezing or double-tapping. This feedback enhances the user's interaction with the device, making digital sketching and note-taking more intuitive. For the first time, the Apple Pencil Pro includes support for the Find My app, **offering a practical solution for locating the accessory** if it is misplaced, something other Apple Pencils should add. Designed to pair, charge, and store magnetically on the side of the newly announced iPad Pro and iPad Air models, **it's not backward compatible with older iPad models.**


Pencil Pro

Apple's Let Loose event introduced a range of high-end iPads for the next generation of creatives, and we can't wait to see what new tools and features iPadOS 18 will bring when it's announced at the Worldwide Developers Conference in a few weeks' time.

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ONE TECH TIP: HOW TO SPOT AI-GENERATED DEEPFAKE IMAGES

SORA

AI fakery is quickly becoming one of the biggest problems confronting us online. Deceptive pictures, videos and audio are proliferating as a result of the rise and misuse of generative artificial intelligence tools.

With AI deepfakes cropping up almost every day, depicting everyone from Taylor Swift to Donald Trump to Katy Perry attending the Meta Gala, it's getting harder to tell what's real from what's not. Video and image generators like DALL-E, Midjourney and OpenAI's Sora make it easy for people without any technical skills to create deepfakes — just type a request and the system spits it out.

These fake images might seem harmless. But they can be used to carry out scams and identity theft or propaganda and election manipulation.

Here is how to avoid being duped by deepfakes:

HOW TO SPOT A DEEPFAKE

In the early days of deepfakes, the technology was far from perfect and often left telltale signs of manipulation. Fact-checkers have pointed out images with obvious errors, like hands with six fingers or eyeglasses that have differently shaped lenses.

But as AI has improved, it has become a lot harder. Some widely shared advice — such as looking for unnatural blinking patterns among people in deepfake videos — no longer holds, said Henry Ajder, founder of consulting firm Latent Space Advisory and a leading expert in generative AI.

Still, there are some things to look for, he said.

A lot of AI deepfake photos, especially of people, have an electronic sheen to them, "an aesthetic sort of smoothing effect" that leaves skin "looking incredibly polished," Ajder said.

He warned, however, that creative prompting can sometimes eliminate this and many other signs of AI manipulation.

Check the consistency of shadows and lighting. Often the subject is in clear focus and appears convincingly lifelike but elements in the backdrop might not be so realistic or polished.

LOOK AT THE FACES

Face-swapping is one of the most common deepfake methods. Experts advise looking closely at the edges of the face. Does the facial skin tone match the rest of the head or the body? Are the edges of the face sharp or blurry?

If you suspect video of a person speaking has been doctored, look at their mouth. Do their lip movements match the audio perfectly?

Ajder suggests looking at the teeth. Are they clear, or are they blurry and somehow not consistent with how they look in real life?

Cybersecurity company Norton says algorithms might not be sophisticated enough yet to generate individual teeth, so a lack of outlines for individual teeth could be a clue.

THINK ABOUT THE BIGGER PICTURE

Sometimes the context matters. Take a beat to consider whether what you're seeing is plausible.

The Poynter journalism website advises that if you see a public figure doing something

OURNEY

HENRY
AJDER

that seems "exaggerated, unrealistic or not in character," it could be a deepfake.

For example, would the pope really be wearing a luxury puffer jacket, as depicted by a notorious fake photo? If he did, wouldn't there be additional photos or videos published by legitimate sources?

At the Met Gala, over-the-top costumes are the whole point, which added to the confusion. But such big name events are typically covered by officially accredited photographers who produce plenty of photos that can help with verification. One clue that the Perry picture was bogus is the carpeting on the stairs, which some eagle-eyed social media users pointed out was from the 2018 event.

USING AI TO FIND THE FAKES

Another approach is to use AI to fight AI.

OpenAI said this week it's releasing a tool to detect content made with DALL-E 3, the latest version of its AI image generator. Microsoft has developed an authenticator tool that can analyze photos or videos to give a confidence score on whether it's been manipulated. Chipmaker Intel's FakeCatcher uses algorithms to analyze an image's pixels to determine if it's real or fake.

There are tools online that promise to sniff out fakes if you upload a file or paste a link to the suspicious material. But some, like OpenAI's tool and Microsoft's authenticator, are only available to selected partners and not the public. That's partly because researchers don't want to tip off bad actors and give them a bigger edge in the deepfake arms race.

Micro

Open access to detection tools could also give people the impression they are "godlike technologies that can outsource the critical thinking for us" when instead we need to be aware of their limitations, Ajder said.

THE HURDLES TO FINDING FAKES

All this being said, artificial intelligence has been advancing with breakneck speed and AI models are being trained on internet data to produce increasingly higher-quality content withfewer flaws.

That means there's no guarantee this advice will still be valid even a year from now.

Experts say it might even be dangerous to put the burden on ordinary people to become digital Sherlocks because it could give them a false sense of confidence as it becomes increasingly difficult, even for trained eyes, to spot deepfakes.

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US LOOSENS SOME ELECTRIC VEHICLE BATTERY RULES, POTENTIALLY MAKING MORE EVS ELIGIBLE FOR TAX CREDITS

The U.S. government loosened some rules governing electric vehicle tax credits, potentially making more EVs eligible for credits of up to $7,500 but leading critics to accuse the Biden administration of helping China.

The Treasury Department announced final regulations for the credits under the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, giving automakers more time to comply with some provisions about where battery minerals can come from.

HUBER+SUHNER

The credits range from $3,750 to $7,500 for new EVs. There's also a $4,000 credit for used ones.

They're aimed at juicing demand for EVs in an effort to reach a Biden administration goal that half of all new vehicle sales be electric by 2030. This year the credits are available at the time a vehicle is purchased from an authorized dealer rather than waiting for an income tax refund.

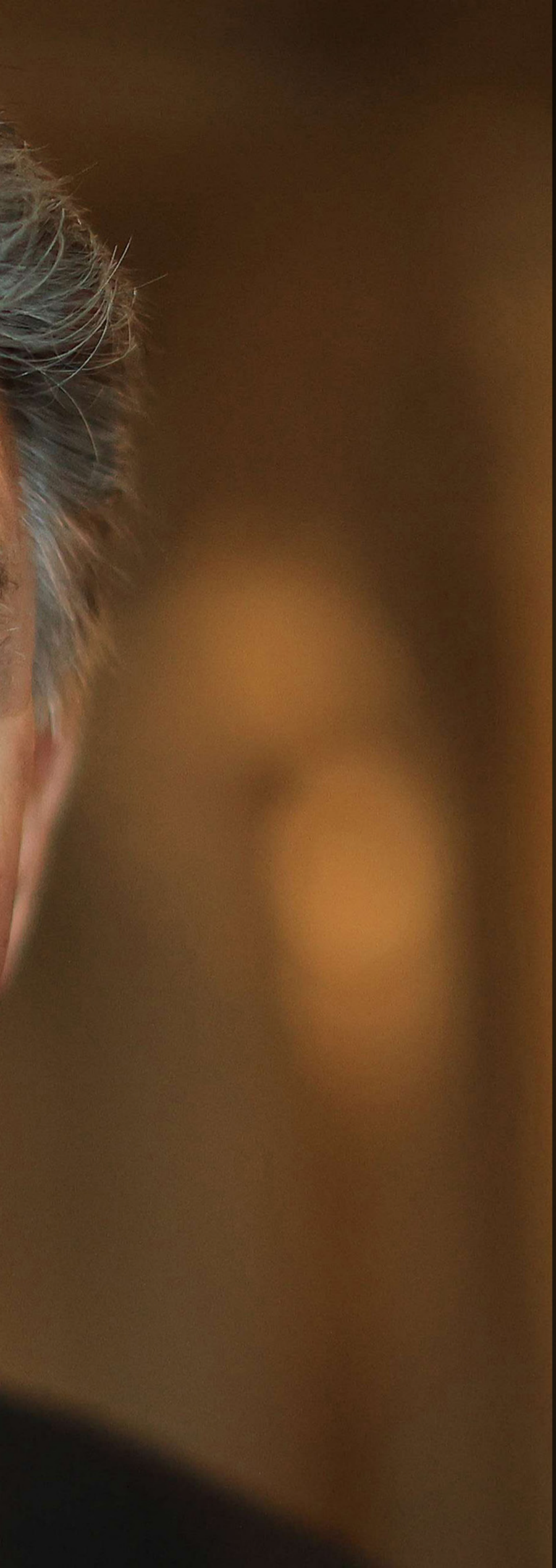
Qualifying for the credits depends on a person's income, the price of the vehicles and requirements related to battery makeup and minerals that get tougher each year. To get the credits, EVs must be assembled in North America. Some plug-in hybrids also can qualify.

Starting this year, complex rules are being phased in to promote development of a domestic electric vehicle supply chain. The rules would limit EV buyers from claiming the full tax credit if they purchase cars containing battery materials from China and other nations "of concern" that are considered hostile to the United States. Those include Russia, North Korea and Iran.

Under the final rule, however, small amounts of graphite and other minerals used in batteries would be exempt from the restriction until 2027, because their country of origin is nearly impossible to trace, officials said. Without the exemption, some vehicles that met nearly all of the requirements could get knocked out of tax credit eligibility due to tiny amounts that couldn't be traced, Treasury said.

The National Mining Association slammed the new exemptions as a giveaway to China.

"Congress created these tax incentives to secure our supply chains and generate American



jobs while supporting EV adoption. They did not intend for loopholes to be created that essentially amount to a blank check from the American taxpayer to China," said Rich Nolan, the mining lobby's president and CEO.

West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said that through the new rule, the Biden administration "is effectively endorsing 'made in China.'"

Manchin, who played a key role in passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, President Joe Biden's landmark climate law, said the law specifically prohibits EVs that contain materials from foreign adversaries such as China and Russia from being eligible for the tax credit after 2024. "But now Treasury has provided a long-term pathway for these countries to remain in our supply chains. It's outrageous and illegal," he said.

This year half of the critical minerals in an EV's battery have to be mined or processed in the U.S., or a country with which it has a free trade agreement. Sixty percent of the battery parts have to be made or assembled in North America.

Starting in 2025, batteries with any critical minerals from nations of concern would not be eligible for any tax credits. But after getting comment from the auto industry and others, treasury officials decided to loosen that restriction.

The rule is likely to make more EVs eligible for credits in 2025 and 2026, but the auto industry says that's difficult to tell until automakers finish tracing the origin of all the minerals.

"The EV transition requires nothing short of a complete transformation of the U.S. industrial base," John Bozzella, CEO of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, a large industry trade group, said in a statement. "That's a monumental task that won't – and can't – happen overnight."

The rule change, he said, "makes good sense for investment, job creation and consumer EV adoption."

At present, China dominates crucial parts of EV battery supply and production, even as automakers race to establish key mineral and components efforts elsewhere.

Of 114 EV models currently sold in the U.S., only 13 qualify for the full $7,500 credit, the automotive alliance said.

Despite the tax credits, sales of electric vehicles grew only 3.3% to nearly 270,000 from January through March of this year, far below the 47% growth that fueled record sales and a 7.6% market share last year. The slowdown, led by Tesla, confirms automakers' fears that they moved too quickly to pursue EV buyers. The EV share of total U.S. sales fell to 7.15% in the first quarter, according to Motorintelligence.com.

"The Inflation Reduction Act's clean vehicle credits save consumers up to $7,500 on a new vehicle, and hundreds of dollars per year on gas, while creating good paying jobs and strengthening our energy security," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement.

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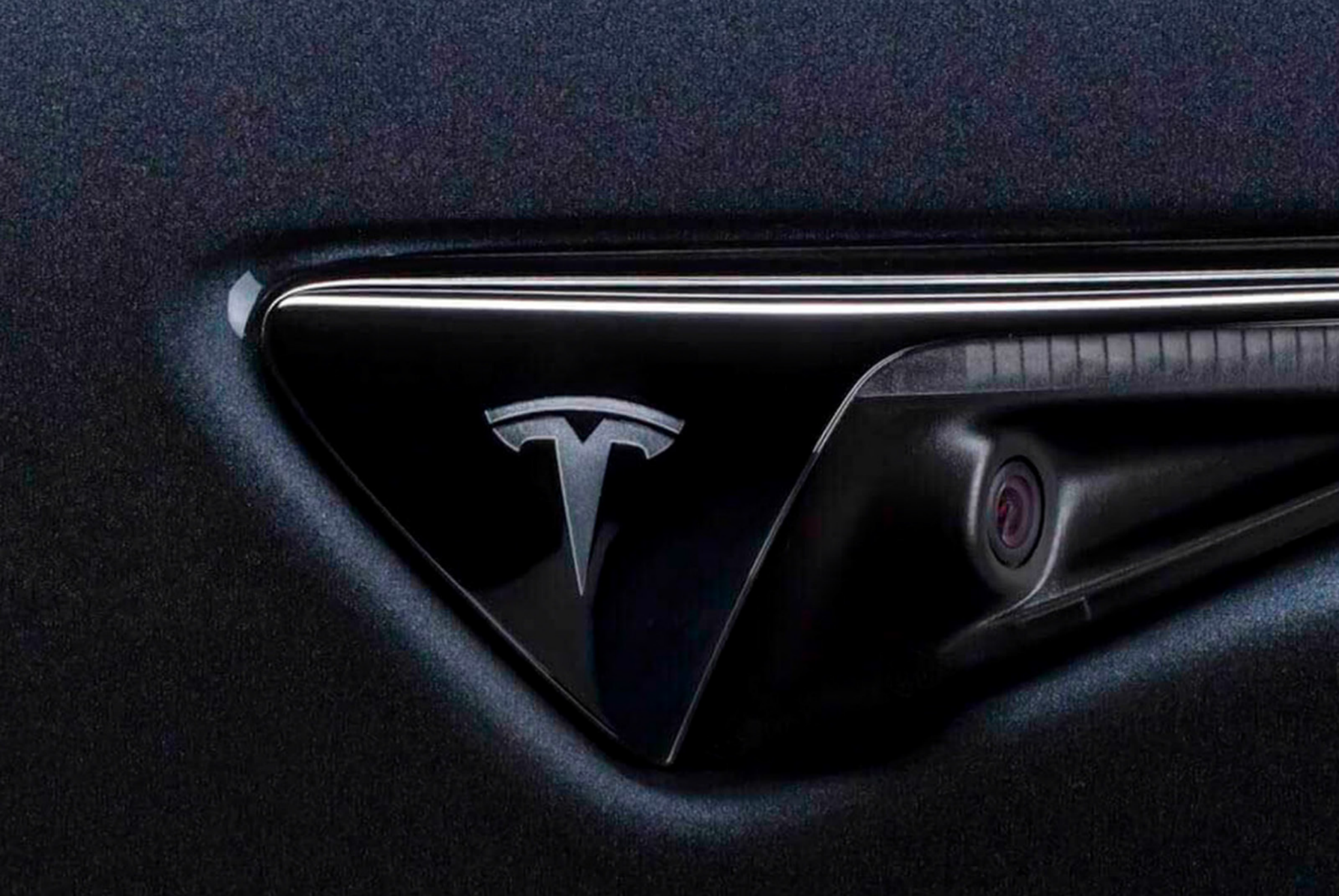

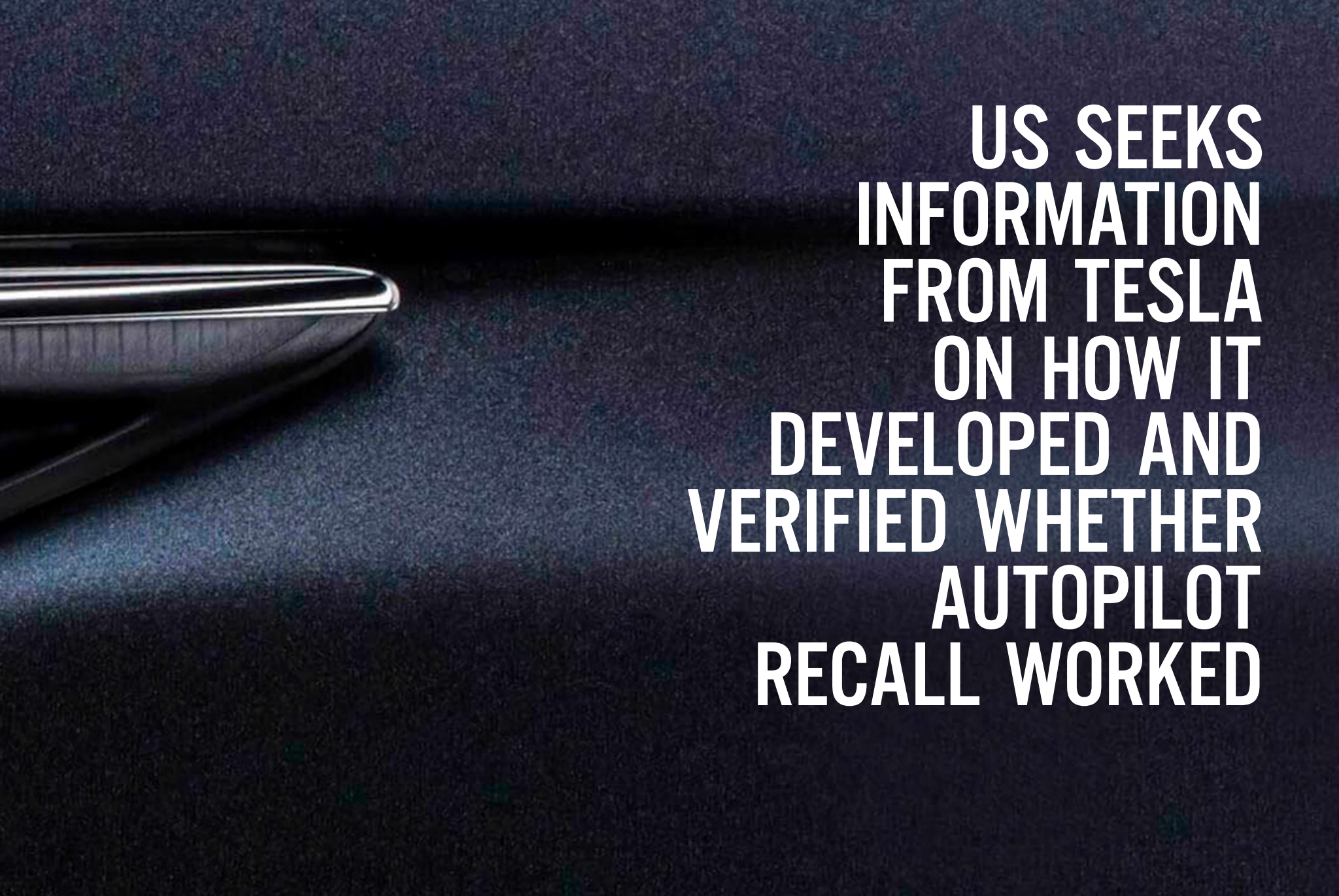

US SEEKS INFORMATION FROM TESLA ON HOW IT DEVELOPED AND VERIFIED WHETHER AUTOPILOT RECALL WORKED

Federal highway safety investigators want Tesla to tell them how and why it developed the fix in a recall of more than 2 million vehicles equipped with the company's Autopilot partially automated driving system.

Investigators with the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have concerns about whether the recall remedy worked because Tesla has reported 20 crashes since the remedy was sent out as an online software update in December.

The recall fix also was to address whether Autopilot should be allowed to operate on roads other than limited access highways. The fix for that was increased warnings to the driver on roads with intersections.

But in a letter to Tesla posted on the agency's website, investigators wrote that they could not find a difference between warnings to the driver to pay attention before the recall and after the new software was released. The agency said it will evaluate whether driver warnings are adequate, especially when a driver-monitoring camera is covered.

Phil Koopman, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University who studies automated driving safety, said the letter shows that the recall did little to solve problems with Autopilot and was an attempt to pacify NHTSA, which demanded the recall after more than two years of investigation.

"It's pretty clear to everyone watching that Tesla tried to do the least possible remedy to see what they could get away with," Koopman said. "And NHTSA has to respond forcefully or other car companies will start pushing out inadequate remedies."

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Image: Paul Sancya

Safety advocates have long expressed concern that Autopilot, which can keep a vehicle in its lane and a distance from objects in front of it, was not designed to operate on roads other than limited access highways.

Missy Cummings, a professor of engineering and computing at George Mason University who studies automated vehicles, said NHTSA is responding to criticism from legislators for a perceived lack of action on automated vehicles.

"As clunky as our government is, the feedback loop is working," Cummings said. "I think the NHTSA leadership is convinced now that this is a problem."

The 18-page NHTSA letter asks how Tesla used human behavior science in designing Autopilot, and the company's assessment of the importance of evaluating human factors.

It also wants Tesla to identify every job involved in human behavior evaluation and the qualifications of the workers. And it asks Tesla to say whether the positions still exist.

Tesla is in the process of laying off about 10% of its workforce, about 14,000 people, in an effort to cut costs to deal with falling global sales.

Cummings said she suspects that CEO Elon Musk would have laid off anyone with human behavior knowledge, a key skill needed to deploy partially automated systems like Autopilot, which can't drive themselves and require humans to be ready to intervene at all times.

"If you're going to have a technology that depends upon human interaction, you better have someone on your team that knows what they are doing in that space," she said.

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Cummings said her research has shown that once a driving system takes over steering from humans, there is little left for the human brain to do. Many drivers tend to overly rely on the system and check out.

"You can have your head fixed in one position, you can potentially have your eyes on the road, and you can be a million miles away in your head," she said. "All the driver monitoring technologies in the world are still not going to force you to pay attention."

In its letter, NHTSA also asks Tesla for information about how the recall remedy addresses driver confusion over whether Autopilot has been turned off if force is put on the steering wheel. Previously, if Autopilot was de-activated, drivers might not notice quickly that they have to take over driving.

The recall added a function that gives a "more pronounced slowdown" to alert drivers when Autopilot has been disengaged. But the recall remedy doesn't activate the function automatically — drivers have to do it. Investigators asked how many drivers have taken that step.

NHTSA is asking Telsa "What do you mean you have a remedy and it doesn't actually get turned on?" Koopman said.

The letter, he said, shows NHTSA is looking at whether Tesla did tests to make sure the fixes actually worked. "Looking at the remedy I struggled to believe that there's a lot of analysis proving that these will improve safety," Koopman said.

Image: Simon Dawson

The agency also says Tesla made safety updates after the recall fix was sent out, including an attempt to reduce crashes caused by hydroplaning and to reduce collisions in high speed turn lanes. NHTSA said it will look at why Tesla didn't include the updates in the original recall.

NHTSA could seek further recall remedies, make Tesla limit where Autopilot can work, or even force the company to disable the system until it is fixed, safety experts said.

NHTSA began its Autopilot investigation in 2021, after receiving 11 reports that Teslas using Autopilot struck parked emergency vehicles. In documents explaining why the investigation was ended due to the recall, NHTSA said it ultimately found 467 crashes involving Autopilot resulting in 54 injuries and 14 deaths.

Image: Mike Blake

SLOW TO EXPAND, INTERNET CASINO GAMBLING IS THE FUTURE OF US BETTING, INDUSTRY EXECS SAY

Internet casino gambling is legal in only a handful of states, but the industry is convinced it is the future of betting, even as some worry about cannibalizing physical casinos.

Speaking Wednesday at the SBC Summit North America, a major gambling industry conference, industry executives acknowledged the difficulty they've had in expanding the legalization of online casino games.

Yet they remain certain that, like many other industries, the future of gambling is online.

"Once you get to millennials, people are comfortable basically running their entire life off their cell phone," said Elizabeth Suever, a vice president with Bally's Corporation. "This is where gaming is going."

It's just not getting there all that quickly.

Only seven U.S. states currently offer legal online casino games: Connecticut, Delaware, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and West Virginia. Nevada offers internet poker but not online casino games.

In contrast, 38 states plus Washington D.C. offer legal sports betting, the overwhelming majority of which is done online, mostly through cell phones.

When the U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way in 2018 for any U.S. state to offer legal sports betting, such bets "took off like a rocket," said Shawn Fluharty, a West Virginia legislator and president of the National Council of Legislators from Gaming States.

"Many people thought i-gaming would follow suit," he said. "That has not taken place."

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"It's been a rough road," agreed Brandt Iden, a vice president with Fanatics Betting & Gaming. "I-gaming is paramount; this is the direction the industry needs to go to be successful, and this is where consumers want it to go."

Last month, Deutsche Bank issued a research note saying it is likely a matter of "when, not if" internet gambling in Atlantic City overtakes revenue from physical casinos.

Panelists agreed the industry needs to do a better job of educating state lawmakers about internet casino games, drawing explicit comparisons with the illegal, unregulated offshore web sites that attract customers from across the country. Legal sites are strictly regulated and offer customer protections, including responsible gambling options like self-imposed time-outs and deposit and activity limits, they said.

Cesar Fernandez, a senior director with FanDuel, said online casino games should prove increasingly attractive as federal post-pandemic aid dries up and states look for new revenue without raising taxes on their residents.

"Since 2018, FanDuel has paid $3.2 billion in taxes," he said. "That's a lot of teacher salaries, a lot of police officers and firefighters."

The industry cites several challenges to wider approval of internet casino gambling, including fears of increasing gambling addiction by "putting a slot machine in people's pocket," Iden said, adding casino companies need to do a better job of publicizing player protections the online companies offer.

Then there is the ongoing debate in the industry over whether internet gambling cannibalizes physical casinos. Many in the industry have long said the two types of gambling complement each other.

But recently, some casino executives have said they believe online gambling is hurting the revenues of brick-and-mortar casinos.

Adam Glass, an executive with Rush Street Interactive, an online gambling company, said his firm has relationships with physical casinos as well, and works hard to be "additive" to them.

He said online gambling can also be a job creator, not only designing and operating the games themselves, but also in ancillary industries like marketing and media.

FTX WILL RETURN MONEY TO MOST CUSTOMERS LESS THAN 2 YEARS AFTER CATASTROPHIC CRYPTO COLLAPSE

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FTX says that nearly all of its customers will receive the money back that they are owed, two years after the cryptocurrency exchange imploded, and some will get more than that.

FTX said in a court filing late Tuesday that it owes about $11.2 billion to its creditors. The exchange estimates that it has between $14.5 billion and $16.3 billion to distribute to them.

The filing said that after paying claims in full, the plan provides for supplemental interest payments to creditors, to the extent that funds still remain. The interest rate for most creditors is 9%.

That may be a diminished consolation for investors who were trading cryptocurrency on the exchange when it collapsed. When FTX sought bankruptcy protection in November 2022, bitcoin was going for $16,080. But crypto prices have soared as the economy recovered while the assets at FTX were sorted out over the past two years. A single bitcoin this week was selling for close to $62,675. That comes out to a 290% loss, a bit less than that if accrued interest is counted, if those investors had held onto those coins.

Customers and creditors that claim $50,000 or less will get about 118% of their claim, according to the plan, which was filed with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware. This covers about 98% of FTX customers.

FTX said that it was able to recover funds by monetizing a collection of assets that mostly consisted of proprietary investments held by the Alameda or FTX Ventures businesses, or litigation claims.

FTX was the third-largest cryptocurrency exchange in the world when it filed for bankruptcy protection in November 2022 after it experienced the crypto equivalent of a bank run.

CEO and founder Sam Bankman-Fried resigned when the exchange collapsed. In March he was sentenced to 25 years in prison for the massive fraud that occurred at FTX.

Bankman-Fried was convicted in November of fraud and conspiracy — a dramatic fall from a crest of success that included a Super Bowl advertisement, testimony before Congress and celebrity endorsements from stars like quarterback Tom Brady, basketball point guard Stephen Curry and comedian Larry David.

The company appointed as its new CEO John Ray III, a long-time bankruptcy litigator who is best known for having to clean up the mess made after the collapse of Enron.

“We are pleased to be in a position to propose a chapter 11 plan that contemplates the return of 100% of bankruptcy claim amounts plus interest for non-governmental creditors,” Ray said in a prepared statement.

FTX, technically, remains a company but its future is unclear. In early 2023, Ray said that he had formed a task force to explore reviving FTX.com, the crypto exchange.

The sordid details of a company run amuck that emerged after its assets were seized would hamstring almost any business attempting a comeback, but there may also be different parameters for cryptocurrency exchanges.

The rival crypto exchange Binance briefly explored acquiring FTX before it collapsed in late

2022. Its founder and former CEO Changpeng Zhao, was sentenced last week to four months in prison for looking the other way as criminals used the platform to move money connected to child sex abuse, drug trafficking and terrorism.

Binance is still the largest crypto exchange in the world.

The bankruptcy court is set to hold a hearing on the dispersion of FTX assets on June 25.

NINTENDO TO ANNOUNCE SWITCH SUCCESSOR IN THIS FISCAL YEAR AS PROFITS RISE

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Japanese video-game maker Nintendo said this week that it will make an announcement about a successor to its Switch home console sometime before March 2025.

In reporting its financial results, Nintendo gave no details about the announcement, including about whether it would launch that successor product during this fiscal year, or just announce its plans for it.

"We will make an announcement about the successor to Nintendo Switch within this fiscal year. It will have been over nine years since we announced the existence of Nintendo Switch back in March 2015," the company's president, Shuntaro Furukawa, said in a statement.

Kyoto-based Nintendo Co. reported a 13% rise in profit for the fiscal year that ended in March, boosted by solid demand for Switch software like "The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom."

Nintendo's net profit for the fiscal year through March 2024 totaled 490.6 billion yen ($3 billion), up from 432.7 billion yen in the previous fiscal year. Annual sales rose 4% to 1.67 trillion yen ($11 billion), nearly 80% of it from outside Japan.

Besides "The Legend of Zelda," whose global sales for the fiscal year totaled 20.6 million units, "Super Mario Bros. Wonder" sold 13.4 million units, and "Pikmin 4" sold nearly 3.5 million, according to Nintendo.

The release a year ago of the film, "The Super Mario Bros. Movie," also helped sales

The yen's weakness against the dollar, which lifts the value in yen of overseas earnings of Japanese exporters like Nintendo, also

helped. The U.S. dollar has averaged about 151 Japanese yen over the past fiscal year, up from 133 yen in the previous fiscal year.

Nintendo, which did not break down quarterly numbers, was less optimistic about its financial results for the fiscal year through March 2025, forecasting net profit to fall to 300 billion yen ($1.9 billion).

Nintendo has sold more than 141 million Switch machines, 15.7 million of them during the fiscal year that just ended.

Such sales tend to gradually decline over the years, so offering a steady stream of fun games is crucial.

“Endless Ocean Luminous,” which went on sale this month, has the player go on a virtual scuba diving adventure, complete with whales, colorful fish and other sea creatures. “Luigi’s Mansion 2,” featuring the plumber Mario’s brother, goes on sale next month.

Nintendo is also planning a new film for worldwide release in April 2026. It’s counting on the openings of Donkey Kong Country in Universal Studios Japan, as well as a museum on Nintendo in Kyoto, both scheduled for later this year, to woo more fans to its franchise.

VISION PRO UNVEILS MARVEL'S NEW INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE: 'WHAT IF...?

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Walt Disney Company revealed an innovative addition to its Disney+ lineup, exclusive to Apple Vision Pro users. “What If...? An Immersive Story” represents Disney’s pioneering venture into interactive storytelling, designed specifically for the advanced mixed reality capabilities of Apple Vision Pro.

The app is inspired by the Marvel’s What If...? series, inviting fans to explore the Multiverse in an unprecedented way.

Users will experience a unique blend of video, interactive storytelling, and mixed reality.

This hour-long narrative adventure promises to immerse users deeply into the Marvel Universe, offering a dynamic and engaging experience that integrates both augmented and virtual realities.

By using simple gestures and movements, participants can interact with the environment

around them, making each journey through the story uniquely their own.

The new app stands out as a multifaceted experience—part video, part game, and part augmented reality adventure.

The forthcoming release will leverage the spatial computing power of Apple Vision Pro to deliver a seamless and technologically sophisticated experience.

This initiative underscores the longstanding partnership between Disney and Apple, a collaboration previously highlighted during the Vision Pro announcement by Disney CEO Bob Iger.

Though the exact release date for "What If...? An Immersive Story" remains undisclosed, anticipation is building.

This project is not only a significant step in immersive media but also fulfills the creative potential that Iger emphasized last fall when he supported the Vision Pro platform.

Fans eager for a deeper dive into the specifics of this app can find more details in a recent Marvel.com interview with the creators of the project.

PARIS 2024
PARIS 2024

FRENCH CYBERWARRIORS READY TO TEST THEIR DEFENSE AGAINST HACKERS AND MALWARE DURING THE OLYMPICS

Just like the Olympic athletes, the cyberwarriors that will be crucial for the success of the Paris Games are deep into training for the big event.

They have turned to friendly hackers to probe their cyberdefenses, like boxers who use sparring partners to ready them for a championship fight. They have studied and analyzed the strengths, tactics and weaknesses of their opponents. Those could be anyone from teenage showoffs and ransomware gangs to Russian military hackers with a track record of malicious cyberattacks.

Image: Michel Euler

Image: Michel Euler

But unlike the 10,500 Olympians who will converge on France's capital in July, the cybersecurity engineers behind the Games are hoping to stay out of the spotlight. For them, the equivalent of a medal will be getting through the Olympics – and Paralympics – without a major incident. It would mean that their layers of digital defenses stand up to attempts to paralyze computer and information systems vital for the Games.

"My dream for the Olympics is that technology and cybersecurity aren't talked about, because that will mean it was a non-issue," said Jérémy Couture, who heads the Paris Games organizers' cybersecurity hub. Its job of spotting, analyzing and responding to cyberthreats is so sensitive and critical to the Games' success that event organizers keep its location secret.

While those in charge of fending off cyberattacks during the Games aren't willing to divulge much detail about their work, they have no doubt malicious hackers are going to keep them busy this summer. Those could range from cybercriminals to thrill-seeking teenage troublemakers to Russian military intelligence operatives with a track record of damaging cyberattacks.

Targets are not limited to the Games themselves but also infrastructure essential for them, such as transport networks or supply chains.

Attackers could include "hacktivists" seeking to make a political statement and cyberextortionists bent on lucre. And often these days, it can be difficult to distinguish a hacktivist from a state-sponsored cyber operator posing as one.

Among the most threatening cyberadversaries are countries who might want to embarrass and exact costs on France and the International Olympic Committee with proven offensive hacking chops. Russia tops the list of suspects.

Because of Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, Olympic organizers have barred it from competing in team events at the Paris Games and will only allow some individual Russians to compete as neutrals. Russia also has beef with France for supplying Ukraine with weapons and military training and because it has become one of Moscow's fiercest critics in Europe.

Vincent Strubel, who heads France's national cybersecurity agency, known by its French initials, ANSSI, called the cyberthreats level facing the Games unprecedented.

"There will be cyberattacks during the Games and the Paralympics," Strubel said at a briefing. "Some won't be serious. Some will be serious but won't have an impact on the Games. And perhaps there will be some that are serious and liable to have an impact on the Games."

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He said the agency has trained "enormously" and more than ever before, so things will go well. "I think we have managed to stay a step ahead of the attackers."

While Strubel named Russia as among the actors who attack France "a bit recurrently," he said it makes no sense to focus on one actor in particular. "We are preparing for everything."

An especially aggressive unit of Russia's GRU military intelligence agency dubbed Sandworm is blamed by Western nations for using malware dubbed "Olympic Destroyer" to disrupt the opening ceremony of the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. It's the same unit accused of so-called wiper attacks on Ukraine's power grid and the 2017 NotPetya virus that caused over $10 billion in damage worldwide.

Paris' cybersecurity teams have sought to learn from those experiences, consulting technicians who also worked in Pyeongchang.

Sweden-based cybersecurity firm Outpost24 gave a broad thumbs-up to Paris' preparations in a report last week, but said its research still found gaps in the Games' online infrastructure. The rating it gave was "not quite a gold medal, but certainly a silver."

"Just as pickpockets and ticket touts target groups of tourists, cybercriminals will be conscious of increased online traffic towards the Paris 2024 games and will hope to capitalize," the report said.

DATA PROTECTION
SETTINGS
SETTINGS
INTERNET

RYAN GOSLING AND EMILY BLUNT ARE GREAT FUN IN ‘THE FALL GUY’

REVIEW

The Fall Guy | Official Trailer 2

One of the worst movie sins is when a comedy fails to at least match the natural charisma of its stars. Not all actors are capable of being effortlessly witty without a tightly crafted script and some excellent direction and editing. But Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt seem, at least from afar, adept at that game. Just look at their charming press tour for "The Fall Guy." Theirs is the kind of fun banter that can be a little worrisome — what if their riffing is better than the movie?

It comes as a great relief, then, that "The Fall Guy" lives up to its promise. Here is a delightful blend of action, comedy and romance that will make the audience feel like a Hollywood insider for a few hours (although there are perhaps one too many jokes about Comic-Con and Hall H).

Loosely based on the 1980s Lee Majors television series about a stuntman who made some extra cash on the side bounty hunting, Gosling takes up the mantle of said stunt guy, Colt Seavers.

Colt is a workaday stunt performer and longtime go-to for a major movie star, Tom Ryder (Aaron Taylor-Johnson). Tom is the kind of deeply egotistical and self-conscious A-lister who tells everyone he does his own stunts and worries out loud about Colt's jawline being distractingly softer than his. I think the word "potato" is thrown around as a descriptor. Taylor-Johnson has quite a bit of fun playing up all his eccentricities that you hope, and fear, are at least somewhat inspired by real horror stories of stars behaving badly.

The film comes from director David Leitch, the Brad Pitt stuntman and stunt coordinator

The Fall Guy | Official Trailer

who helped bring "John Wick" to the world and directed "Atomic Blonde" and "Bullet Train." He's a guy who not only has the vision and know-how to bring the best in stunts to films and make them pop, but also has a vested interest in putting them in the spotlight. Forget the Oscar, how about just any acknowledgement? Perhaps "The Fall Guy" is just one tiny step on the path to making audiences more aware of some of the behind-the-scenes people who really make movies better and risk it all to do so.

It's revealing that the movie starts with Colt suffering a terrible injury on a set. The stunt that goes wrong is one he's just done and doesn't seem remotely nervous about. The film cuts to his recovery and semi-reclusive retirement until he gets a call from Tom's producer Gail (a delightfully over-the-top Hannah Waddingham) begging Colt to come back for a new film. They need him, she pleads, as does his longtime crush Jody (Blunt), who is making her directorial debut. She waits to inform him that Tom is missing and he's the one who has to find him. On the quest, Colt encounters tough-guy goons, enablers, a sword-wielding actress, and a dead body on ice that all lead up to something big and rotten. And like a selfless stunt guy, he does it all out of sight of Jody — trying his best to save her movie without giving her something extra to worry about. Nothing about it is particularly plausible, but it's not hard to get on board for the ride, and much of that is because of Gosling.

While he's not quite underappreciated for his comedic timing, especially after "Barbie," it's fun to get to see him really embrace and lean into the goofiness — whether it's crying and

The Fall Guy | Everything

singing along to Taylor Swift's "All Too Well" or quoting movie lines to his stunt coordinator pal (Winston Duke, always a good addition) in the midst of an actual fight.

There is something very juvenile and sweet about Jody and Colt's will-they-won't-they romance, with its mix of attraction, banter, misunderstandings and hurt feelings. It was a genius stroke to cast these two opposite each other and it leaves you wanting more scenes with the two.

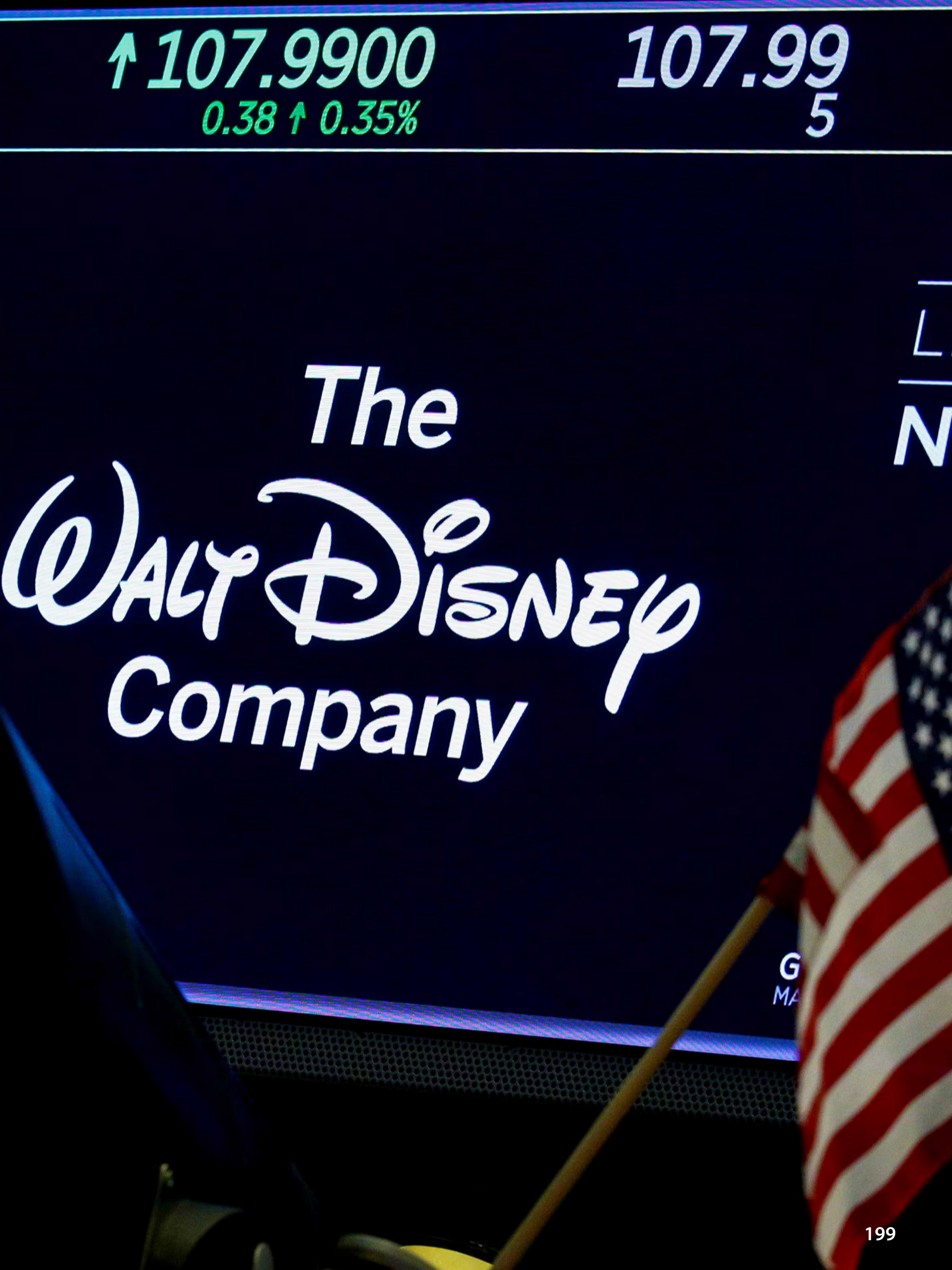
Working with a script from Drew Pearce ("Hobbs & Shaw"), Leitch packs the film with wall-to-wall action, in both the film's movie sets and its real world. And with the self-referential humor, the industry jokes and the promise of a little romance, it feels like one of those movies we all complain they don't make anymore.

"The Fall Guy," a Universal Picture release in theaters, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "action and violence, drug content and some strong language." Running time: 126 minutes. Three stars out of four.

DISNEY'S STREAMING BUSINESS TURNS A PROFIT IN FIRST FINANCIAL REPORT SINCE CHALLENGE TO IGER

The Walt Disney Co. swung to a loss in its second quarter because of restructuring and impairment charges, but its adjusted profit topped expectations and its streaming business turned a profit. Theme parks also continued to do well and the company boosted its outlook for the year.

While Disney said this week that it foresees its overall streaming business softening in the current quarter due to its platform in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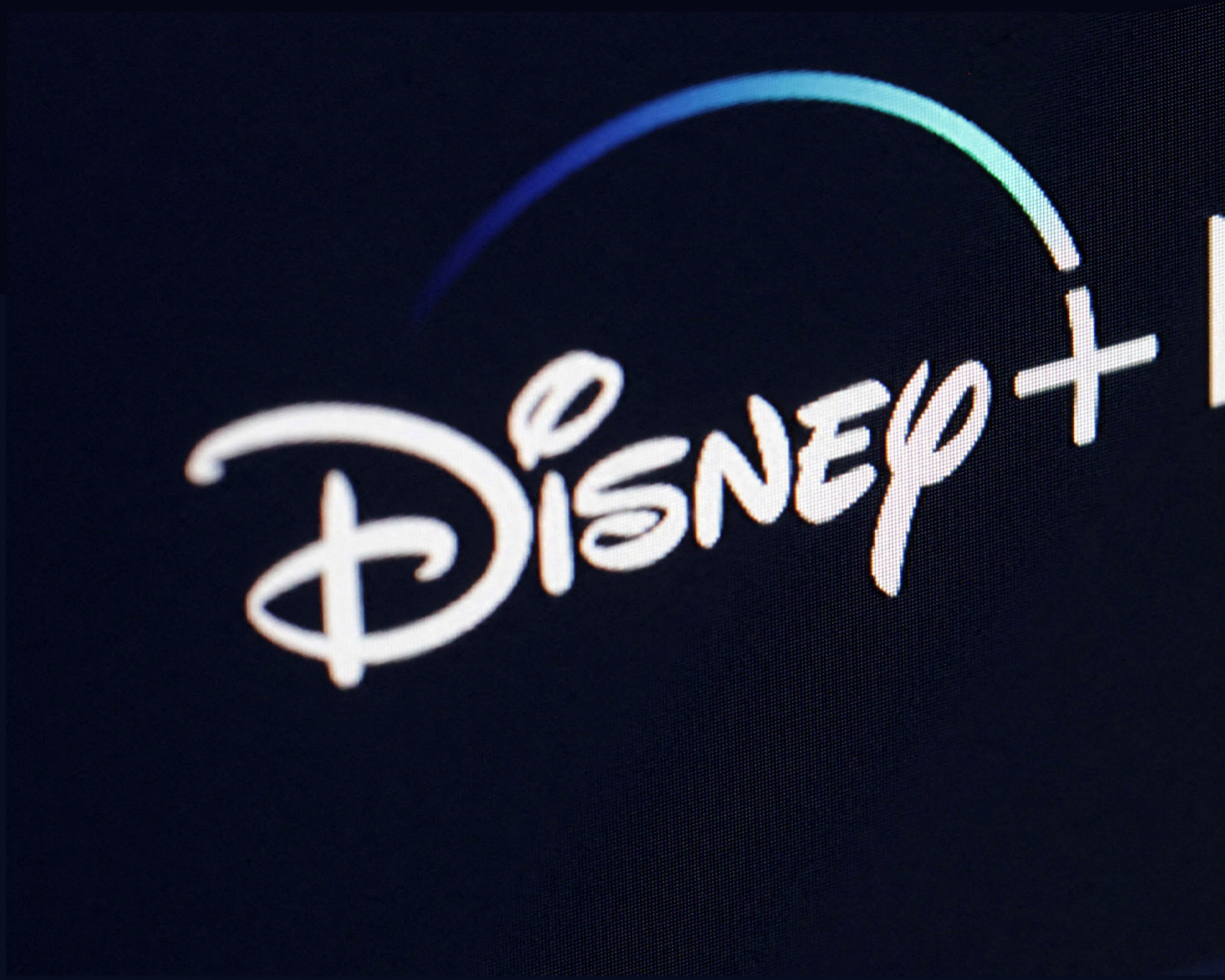
Disney+

India, Disney+Hotstar, it expects its combined streaming businesses to be profitable in the fourth quarter and to be a meaningful future growth driver for the company, with further improvements in profitability in fiscal 2025.

The direct-to-consumer business, which includes Disney+ and Hulu, posted quarterly operating income of $47 million compared with a loss of $587 million a year earlier. Revenue rose 13% to $5.64 billion.

For the combined streaming businesses, which includes Disney+, Hulu and ESPN+, second-quarter operating loss shrunk to $18 million from $659 million, while revenue improved to $6.19 billion from $5.51 billion.

Disney+ core subscribers climbed by more than 6% in the second quarter.

Yet the improved picture for Disney on streaming arrives with its cable business in decline. That segment saw revenue slide 8% in the most recent quarter.

“Looking at our company as a whole, it’s clear that the turnaround and growth initiatives we set in motion last year have continued to yield positive results,” Iger said in a prepared statement.

Speaking during Disney’s conference call, Iger said that the company plans to add an ESPN tab to Disney+ by the end of the year, a maneuver that was previously made with Hulu. This will give U.S. subscribers access to some live sports and studio programming within the Disney+ app.

ESPN, Fox and Warner Bros. Discovery announced plans in February to launch a sports

streaming platform in the fall that will include offerings from at least 15 networks and all four major professional sports leagues.

Iger also said that next month the company will start cracking down on password sharing for its streaming service in some markets, and will expand that crackdown globally in September.

While Disney has quality streaming content, Iger said that the company must now focus on building out its technology, similar to what rivals like Netflix have been doing. Those actions, including the password crackdown, are expected to improve profits.

It's the first financial report since shareholders rebuffed efforts by activist investor Nelson Peltz to claim seats on the company board last month, standing firmly behind Iger as he tries to energize the company after a rough stretch.

Thomas Monteiro, senior analyst at Investing.com, said that some Disney investors may have been expecting more from the quarterly report, but that "the company has tilted its operation back to its core business model, which is more conservative by nature."

Monteiro was focused on the company's efforts to turn its streaming division profitable.

"The big surprise of the day came on the streaming front, which finally managed to bring profits - way ahead of predictions - amid Hollywood's massive strike period," Monteiro said. "This indicates that perhaps the more global, low-production-cost Netflix-like model is probably the way to go in an operation that needs to rethink its growth expectations as a whole."

disneyplus.com
BRAVE
DUG DAYS
MOON KNIGHT
TOY STORY 4
hulu
Disney+
Enter your email to create or restart your
Email
Stream now. Terms Apply
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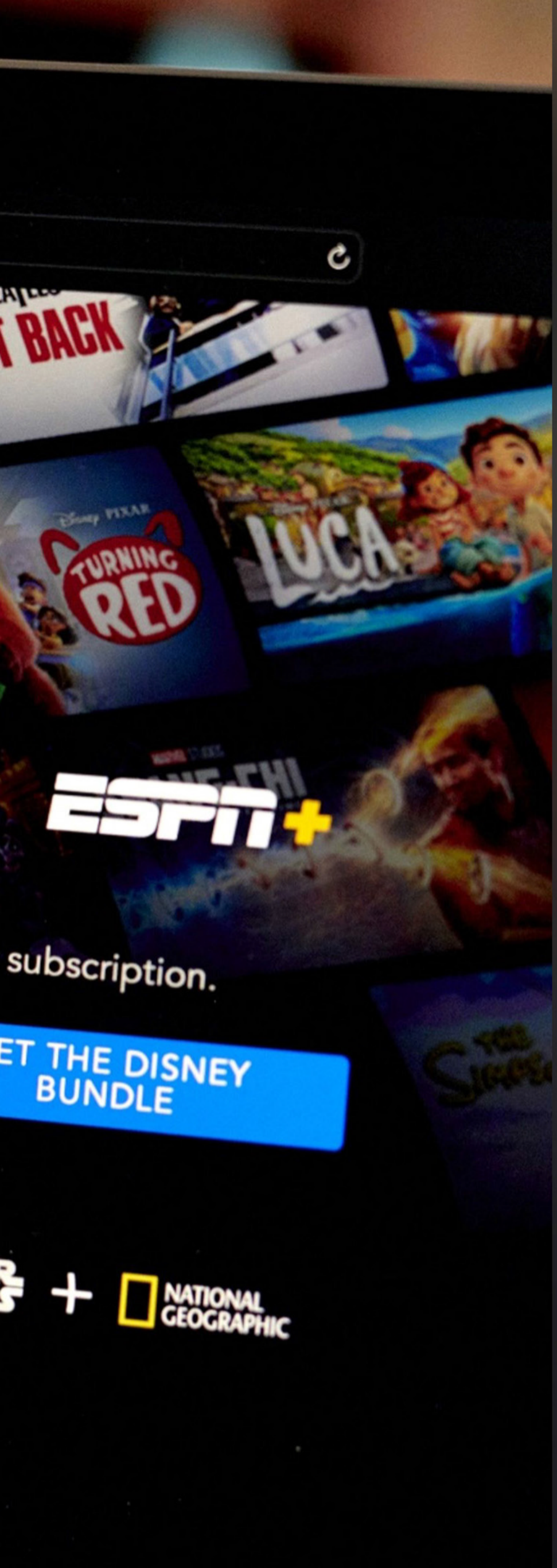

Revenue at Disney's domestic theme parks rose 7%, while its theme parks overseas reported a 29% increase.

But Disney acknowledged wrestling with higher costs at its theme parks during the quarter due to inflation.

The company said that there was increased spending by guests at Walt Disney World due to higher ticket prices, while Disneyland guests boosted their spending due to an increase in ticket prices and hotel room rates.

Overseas, Hong Kong Disneyland benefited from the opening of World of Frozen, a section of the park that includes rides based on the popular "Frozen" movies, in November.

Similar to many tourist destinations, Disney is continuing to adjust to post-pandemic travel.

"While consumers continue to travel in record numbers, and we are still seeing healthy demand, we are seeing some evidence of a global moderation from peak post Covid travel," Chief Financial Officer Hugh Johnston said during the call.

For the period ended March 30, Disney lost $20 million, or a penny per share. That compares with a profit of $1.27 billion, or 69 cents per share, a year ago.

Restructuring and impairment charges surged to $2.05 billion from $152 million in the prior-year period.

Adjusted earnings, which stripped out the charges and other items, were $1.21 per share, easily beating the $1.12 per share that analysts polled by Zacks Investment Research predicted.

Disney said that due to its second-quarter performance, it now has a full-year adjusted earnings per share growth target of 25%. It previously predicted growth of at least 20%.

The Burbank, California, company's revenue rose to $22.08 billion from $21.82 billion a year earlier, but was slightly lower than Wall Street estimates of $22.13 billion.

Content sales and licensing revenue tumbled 40% because Disney didn't release any significant movie titles during the second quarter as compared with the prior-year period, which included the release of "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania." The year-ago results were also helped by the ongoing performance of "Avatar: The Way of Water," which was released in December 2022.

Shares fell more than 8% in morning trading.

In February The Walt Disney Co. said that it was making "significant cost reductions" and reduced its selling, general and other operations expenses by $500 million in its first quarter. The company cut thousands of jobs in 2023.

In March allies of Gov. Ron DeSantis and Disney reached a settlement agreement in a state court fight over how Walt Disney World is developed in the future following the takeover of the theme park resort's government by the Florida governor.

Last month character performers at Disneyland in California and the union organizing them, Actors' Equity Association, said they had filed a petition for union recognition.

INSTACART PARTNERS WITH UBER EATS TO OFFER RESTAURANT DELIVERIES

Grocery delivery company Instacart is partnering with Uber Eats to offer a new perk to its customers: restaurant delivery.

San Francisco-based Instacart said this week that its U.S. shoppers will see a "Restaurants" tab in the company's app in the coming weeks. Restaurant orders will be delivered by Uber Eats drivers.

Instacart said its Instacart Plus members – who pay $99 per year or $9.99 per month for free grocery deliveries over $35 – will also get free

Deals

Convenience

Wholesale

Alcohol

EBT

Household

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Baby care

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8
SOFT
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Swedish

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restaurant delivery for orders over $35. Regular Instacart members will be charged Uber Eats delivery fees.

Instacart said it will earn an affiliate fee with every order, but it didn't reveal any other financial details of the partnership.

Instacart said most Americans shop for groceries — either online or in a store — at least once per week. But more than one-third also order takeout or delivery at least once a week, and it wants to help them meet that need as well.

The deal will give Instacart customers more benefits in the competitive grocery delivery market. Instacart currently controls around 25% of that market in the U.S., behind Walmart at 51%, according to YipitData, a market research company.

Other delivery companies, including DoorDash and Uber Eats itself, also have a small but growing share of that market.

Uber Eats said the deal with Instacart would drive more customers to its restaurant partners, especially in the suburban neighborhoods where the grocery delivery company has the most users.

In documents filed ahead of its initial public offering last summer, Instacart said it had 7.7 million monthly active users. The companies didn't say how many of those customers are also Uber Eats users.

11:16

TIKTOK SUES US TO BLOCK LAW THAT COULD BAN THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

TikTok and its Chinese parent company ByteDance are suing the U.S. over a law that would ban the popular video-sharing app unless it's sold to another company, arguing that it vaguely paints it as a threat to national security to get around the First Amendment.

The widely expected lawsuit filed on Tuesday may be setting up what will likely be a protracted legal fight over TikTok's future in the United States — and could end up before the Supreme Court. If TikTok loses, it says it will be forced to shut down next year.

ByteDance
字节跳动

The popular social video company says that the law, which President Joe Biden signed as part of a larger $95 billion foreign aid package, is so "obviously unconstitutional" that the sponsors of the measure are trying to portray it not as a ban, but as a regulation of TikTok's ownership. It's the first time the U.S. government has singled out a social media company with a potential ban, which free speech advocates note is more common in repressive regimes such as Iran or China.

"Congress has taken the unprecedented step of expressly singling out and banning TikTok: a vibrant online forum for protected speech and expression used by 170 million Americans to create, share, and view videos over the Internet," ByteDance said in its suit, filed in a federal appeals court in Washington D.C. "For the first time in history, Congress has enacted a law that subjects a single, named speech platform to a permanent, nationwide ban, and bars every American from participating in a unique online community with more than 1 billion people worldwide."

The law requires TikTok's parent, ByteDance, to sell the platform within nine months. If a sale is already in progress, the company will get another three months to complete the deal. ByteDance has said it "doesn't have any plan to sell TikTok." But even if it wanted to divest, the company would have to get a blessing from Beijing. According to the lawsuit, the Chinese government has "made clear" that it would not permit ByteDance to divest the recommendation engine that is "key to the success of TikTok in the United States."

TikTok and ByteDance argued in the lawsuit that it isn't being given a choice.

"The 'qualified divestiture' demanded by the Act to allow TikTok to continue operating in the United States is simply not possible: not commercially, not technologically, not legally," they said.

"There is no question: the Act will force a shutdown of TikTok by January 19, 2025," the lawsuit says.

The lawsuit argues that it would be impossible for ByteDance to divest its U.S. TikTok platform as a separate entity from the rest of TikTok, which has 1 billion users worldwide — most of them outside of the United States. A U.S.-only TikTok, the suit says, would operate as an island that's detached from the rest of the world.

TikTok also paints divestment as a technological impossibility, since the law requires all of TikTok's millions of lines of software code to be wrested from ByteDance so that there is no "operational relationship" between the Chinese company and the new U.S. app.

"Specifically, to comply with the law's divestiture requirement, that code base would have to be moved to a large, alternative team of engineers — a team that does not exist and would have no understanding of the complex code necessary to run the platform," the lawsuit says.

The parties argued that they should be protected by the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of expression. They are seeking a declaratory judgment that the Act violates the U.S. Constitution; an order enjoining Attorney General Merrick Garland from enforcing the

Tik

Act and any further relief that the court may deem appropriate.

The Justice Department declined to comment on the suit Tuesday. And White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre declined to engage on questions about why the president continues to use TikTok for his political activities, deferring to the campaign.

ByteDance will first likely ask a court to temporarily block the federal law from going into effect, said Gus Hurwitz, a senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Carey Law School. And the decision whether to grant such a preliminary injunction could decide the case, he said. In its absence, he said, "ByteDance is going to need to sell TikTok before this case is ever decided."

Whether a court will grant such an injunction remains unclear to Hurwitz, largely because it requires balancing important freedom-of-speech issues against the Biden administration's claims of harm to national security. "I think the courts will be very deferential to Congress on these issues," he said.

The fight over TikTok takes place as U.S.-China relations have shifted to that of intense strategic rivalry, especially in areas such as advanced technologies and data security, seen as essential to each country's economic prowess and national security.

U.S. lawmakers from both parties, as well as administration and law enforcement officials, have expressed concerns that Chinese authorities could force ByteDance to hand over U.S. user data or sway public opinion by manipulating the algorithm that populates

users' feeds. Some have also pointed to a Rutgers University study that maintains TikTok content was being amplified or underrepresented based on how it aligns with the interests of the Chinese government, which the company disputes.

Opponents of the law argue that Chinese authorities — or any nefarious parties — could easily get information on Americans in other ways, including through commercial data brokers that rent or sell personal information. They note the U.S. government hasn't provided public evidence that shows TikTok sharing U.S. user information with Chinese authorities, or tinkering with its algorithm for China's benefit.

Jameel Jaffer, executive director of the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, expects TikTok's challenge to the ban to succeed.

"The First Amendment means the government can't restrict Americans' access to ideas, information, or media from abroad without a very good reason for it—and no such reason exists here," Jaffer said in a printed statement.

While TikTok has prevailed in its earlier First Amendment challenges, it is not clear whether the current lawsuit will be as simple.

"The bipartisan nature of this federal law may make judges more likely to defer to a Congressional determination that the company poses a national security risk," said Gautam Hans, a law professor and associate director of the First Amendment Clinic at Cornell University. "Without public discussion of what exactly the risks are, however, it's difficult to determine why the courts should validate such an unprecedented law."

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CONTACTS

Executive Director - ceo@techlifenewsmagazine.com
Relationship Management - crm@techlifenewsmagazine.com
Editor - editor@techlifenewsmagazine.com
Advertise - ads@techlifenewsmagazine.com
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Promotions - promo@techlifenewsmagazine.com

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